

















"Sign!" she commanded—(p. 256).



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# HELENE SAINTE MAUR.

(SECRETS OF A BOUDOIR.)

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BY

LUMAN ALLEN.

AUTHOR OF

"LUCIA LASCAR," "PHARAOH'S TREASURE," ETC.

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# HELENE SAINTE MAUR.

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## CHAPTER I.

### THE FRENCH SKIPPER.

It was twelve o'clock on the morning of November 10, 1788.

Two hours before this the fog, which had enveloped the English coast at sunrise, had fairly lifted from Dover to Folkstone, affording from either point a faint view of the ancient citadel of Boulogne, France.

At Dover the destinies of six persons were being determined; at Boulogne the first act in the drama of their lives was in preparation.

At two o'clock precisely, wind and tide permitting, the only packet lying at the Dover wharf was to leave for Calais. It was a French boat, and on a pennant floating from its white flagstaff appeared the legend:

"La Charmante; Felix Dumesnil, Commander."

The Captain himself stood upon the quay. He was a man of perhaps fifty, with good features, but as dark as a Malay. His body was of enormous size, of splendid proportions, and developed like that of an athlete.

By the side of this Titan, and scarcely reaching to his armpit, stood a slim young man of twenty-five or less, with furtive black eyes, a very pale face, and an exceedingly soft voice. The two were conversing.

"Eight persons, if you choose, Captain," said the slim young man, in an animated treble; "and at five guineas apiece—do you see, that makes forty."

"Pardieu, Monsieur Paul Cambray," exclaimed the giant, in a voice that did ample justice to his great bulk; "it seems to me that you are an able calculator, is it not so?"

The humor of the Captain was lost on the youth, who stroked his silky black moustaches as he answered, complacently:

"I thank you, Monsieur." Then, as if to account for this talent, or perhaps to show that it was inherited, he added, "My grandfather was a financier."

"So?" queried the Captain, satirically.

"It is quite true, I assure you. He discovered how to spend five thousand livres a year out of an income of three thousand."

"Aha! that is what our good Louis is trying to do. Well, and how did your grandfather end?" inquired the commander, drily.

"Why, you see, he was a veritable hothead. When I was just seventeen he took me to his tailor for an outfit a la mode. The tailor was a most unreasonable fellow, who insisted on a payment of five hundred or so arrearages—"

"Just like our French farmers, who are refusing to work for the nobility any longer without pay. But go on."

"My father was so incensed at this demand that he ran the tailor through. For this he was transported, but died on the passage out. My mother then secured me a situation at Paris, in the department of police—"

"Parbleu, yes," interrupted his listener, impatiently; "and you have done justice to your opportunities there."

"I think so," assented Paul, whose assurance, at least, was remarkable. "And I trust that what I learned there has been of some service to yourself since I became your clerk."



"Yes. But now, as to these eight travelers who wish to cross the Channel in my boat—saw you them?"

"Mon Dieu, yes," answered Paul, vehemently.

"Well, then, describe them to me."

"Oh, certainly; but you will see them directly yourself. You have only to go to the Ship Inn, and tell old Bailey Bentinck that you desire to see them; they are all there."

The Captain shrugged his shoulders; it was like the heaving of a mountain and somewhat disconcerted his dapper companion for a moment.

"Patience, my friend," said he, deprecatingly; "I must know something about these strangers before I go to them. Do you not know that every stranger who arrives in France now is watched? And if he is from England or Austria his description is written upon the books of the secret police within twenty-four hours after he reaches Paris. A thousand thunders! I will not risk bad lodgings in La Force for forty—no, *sacre*, not for four hundred guineas."

"But," persisted the young man, "there is no risk whatever in this case."

"You think so. Well, describe these people."

"Listen, then. There are, to begin with, three very handsome English gentlemen. One of the three is Sir Philip Belmore, immensely wealthy, one of the best swordsmen of the day, dark as a raven, symmetrical as Apollo. He has no relatives in the world except his two half brothers, who are also his companions. These are Messieurs Hubert and Ralph Meltham, who are of exactly the same size and appearance, decided blondes; in fact, they are twins. Sir Philip is thirty-seven and the half-brothers are thirty. But the strangest thing is, they are all of the same height, and as tall as grenadiers; besides, they are all dressed exactly alike; yes, in fine gray doub-

let and hose, gray beavers with gray feathers. Their rapiers are superb, and so are their manners."

"Ah, you are a good portrait painter," observed the Captain, eyeing him with curiosity.

"Thanks, Monsieur, my mother was an excellent amateur with the brush."

"And you do excellently well with the alphabet."

"You may well say so," returned Paul, eyeing his master in his turn, but with the utmost complacency.

"Sacriissimo, proceed."

"To be sure. The gentlemen have three varlets; one apiece, of course, all red-faced beef-eaters. Their names are barbarous, I tell you. Sir Philip's is called James or Jeems Guppy, Monsieur Hubert's is Peter Grosscup, and Monsieur Ralph's fellow is called William Trotter."

"Pouf, enough of the varlets. Now, the last two?"

"Ah, ciel!" exclaimed the youth, a sudden inspiration flushing his pale face; "you ask me to describe the Queen of Paradise."

"Aha, a woman," muttered the Captain, looking a trifle uneasy.

"A seraph," cried Paul, in a second burst of enthusiasm, at which the Captain again shrugged his huge shoulders.

"And the name of this celestial bird?" demanded he, ironically.

"Mademoiselle Helene Sainte Maur," replied the youth, lifting his cap with a reverent air. "She is an aristocrat also, a Parisienne. She is a pure, a glorious blonde, with hair like sunshine, a face and neck like the curd of milk, midnight brows, but eyes like the blue sea; and like the blue sea they are deep and always in motion. She is five feet and four inches in height, and her figure—ah-h!"



"In truth, a paragon?"

"You may well say that."

"Well?"

"She is exactly twenty-six—"

"B-r-r-r," rumbled the giant, "you know her age, then? Come, that is impossible."

"Not at all, I assure you."

"Never mind, that makes seven."

"Of course; there is one more, that is Mademoiselle's maid, Clarise, a pretty, dark little grisette, who permitted me to kiss her—small hand, when I uncorded her box. Clarise is not yet nineteen; she is petite and round, and her lips are very red and very sweet, I can tell you."

During this refreshing recital, the ox-like eyes of the skipper were rapidly expanding with a look of wonder which he could no longer repress.

"Tell me, tell me," he roared, "how and where you learned so much of these strangers?"

"That is by no means difficult. You sent me to London to receive from Malpas, the ship broker, the purchase money for La Charmante, Monsieur."

"Very true. And you, Monsieur Paul, have arrived one day later than I expected."

"Exactly; and for an excellent reason, which you shall presently hear. But, first let me deliver the money."

Monsieur Cambray now handed out a package of notes to the Captain, who carefully counted them, placed them in a large wallet which he carried in a capacious waistcoat pocket, and with a sigh looked at his boat, as it rocked gently on the water.

"And you arranged that I should leave the packet at Calais, after my last trip, did you not?"

Paul nodded.

"And now for my story," said he; "I think it will refresh you."

"Pouf. I hope so," muttered the ex-mariner, abstractedly.

"You must know, then, that I am not without a few friends in the foggy English city. So, instead of moping in a dingy inn, while I waited on old Malpas, I looked up one Acuille Dudevant, a sociable young journalist who left Paris for some reason known only to himself. He is an old acquaintance of mine, however, whom I sometimes allowed to see a little ahead, when he squeezed me for news at the Prefecture. Well, I found him in fine apartments; and as he appeared glad to see me again, we sat down to a bottle of sour Bourdeaux which he said sharpened his wits and his pen at the same moment. It certainly loosened his tongue. Well, this Dudevant knows everybody and everything, and he assisted me to a good deal of information. He said—'By Jupiter, Cambray, I desire to relieve myself of some of my obligations to you, and I am thinking how I may begin.' Yes, he wanted to return some of the favors I had formerly extended to him. Ho, ho, Captain, just think of that! Instead of being my enemy because I had helped him, he is my friend."

"An eccentric," murmured the commander.

"I should say so," laughed the young cynic; "all the same I love him for it. To proceed:

"My friend wanted to know if you were still my employer; and if you were still trying to make the passage of the channel in six hours, when it actually consumes from twelve to eighteen; and if your boat would make a trip this week. I told him you would, on my return to Dover, leave for Calais on your last trip. 'That is fortunate,' said my friend; and then he proceeded to inform me that some very desirable people of

his acquaintance were about to journey to Paris, by way of Dover; and that if I would remain over in London one day longer he could secure them for me. In your interest I agreed to do so. He seemed gratified at this, and went on to give me a full account of the party; and I must confess that by the time he was through, I felt rather well acquainted with them myself. Dudevant seemed to have some peculiar personal interest in the matter, besides the wish to do me a favor. Above all, I thought he was strangely anxious that *one* of the party, at all events, should be gotten off.

"My excellent friend managed the affair so well and promptly, that we all journeyed to Dover in the same diligence. I took the whole party to the Ship Inn, of course; and there they are, waiting for you to come to them, so that they may arrange with you for their passage."

"So, so," mused the Captain of La Charmante. "Still, do you not see, my friend, there is a question. Six of these travelers are English; and in these uncertain times in France, the English are distrusted, I may almost say they are detested. It is an easy matter to get into serious trouble with the Ministers of Justice, if one brings conspirators into the country."

"Oh, but these are not conspirators," insisted the young man, earnestly. "I have conversed with them, all of them, do you see? Besides, I received the confidence of Clarise. And what do you think Clarise told me?"

"How should I know?" growled the Titan, in whose huge bosom there existed not a particle of sentiment; "doubtless some nonsense that would only please a mawkish young rake, like my clerk."

"You do injustice to us both, Monsieur," protested Paul, stiffening.



"Well, let us hear it, then."

"Clarise is not a gossip, but she knows a gentleman," continued the youth, with amusing gravity. "Her mistress, she informed me—in confidence, you understand—has a large income, and a fine chateau in Paris; but she has been recently doing London. Last week at the Minister's ball she met Sir Philip Belmore, who bestowed a great deal of attention upon her during the evening. Mademoiselle told him that she was on the eve of returning to Paris; whereupon, Sir Philip suddenly conceived a great desire to travel in the same direction.

"Now, Dudevant, it appears, is a sort of schemer, and has an unbounded admiration for her, and has been a sort of confidant, though he speaks of that with some spite. Through him it was arranged that her party and Sir Philip's—who goes nowhere, it seems, without his two half-brothers—should travel together. And here they are."

After a few moments' reflection, the Captain, who little dreamed of the importance of his decision, said, briefly:

"I will pay my respects to them. Go you on board, and wait my return."

And while the young man promptly obeyed this welcome order, the commander of the packet started along the quay with a step as active as his own.

## CHAPTER II.

SIR PHILIP BELMORE.

In the latter part of the last century the "Ship Inn," at Dover, was a famous post-house. At the date of our story it was kept by a jovial, red-faced Yorkshireman, whose burly figure filled the low doorway as Captain Dumesnil approached.

"What, is it Captain Felix, himself?" exclaimed he, bobbing his fat head with satisfaction.

But the skipper, who was a laconic man, replied with a nod, and asked briefly:

"Where are they, my friend?"

"Oh, ah," answered the landlord, a little disconcerted; "you mean the great party from Lunnun?"

"Certainly; take me in to the gentlemen, or announce me."

"This way, sir, they expect you;" and Bailey led his gigantic visitor at once into a private parlor. The three brothers were seated around a table, upon which were the remains of a substantial lunch. They were abstractedly staring at each other, and the entrance of the Captain seemed a relief to all three. The eldest, Sir Philip, looked up with an affable smile, which changed to a look of interest, and pointed to a capacious chair, into which the immense bulk of the skipper quietly sank.

"I presume you have come to carry us off?" observed Sir Philip, measuring his grand proportions with an admiring eye.

"With your consent, Messieurs," replied he, gracefully; and he proceeded to put a few polite questions, which Sir Philip courteously answered.

In half an hour Captain Felix Dumesnil's scruples, if indeed he had entered the room with any, had been completely removed by the manners and conversation of these charming travelers. He was a man of some culture himself, and their intelligence and wit, while it delighted him, began also to excite in his mind a peculiar interest, which the brothers plainly reciprocated.

Conversation had drifted toward the situation in France, a subject at that time engrossing all Europe.

"And what is the 'state of France,' Captain?" inquired Hubert Meltham, who for some minutes had been cloudily observing Sir Philip.

The Frenchman's brow wrinkled.

"That is a very broad question, Monsieur," replied Dumesnil, slowly. "My poor France is in a state of ebullition. La Vendee is in a ferment, the corn crop in Picardy is poor—"

"And bread is scarce in Paris," added Hubert, as the Captain hesitated. "But the King? Does he still preserve the same apathy in the midst of the public distress?"

Dumesnil groaned, as he answered :

"Louis XVI. is a philosopher. He is a good man, but a poor king. He is, moreover, bearing the burden of sixty years of misrule in France. But it is not the King's fault that, contrary to law, vineyards are planted where wheat would thrive, or that the hailstones fall too often in Soissons."

"And the Queen? Is she really so unpopular?"

Dumesnil shrugged his shoulders expressively.

"In every wine-shop in the Quarters Saint Antoine





“ For God’s sake, keep back ”—(p. 18).



and Saint Marceau," replied he, grimly, "you may every night hear some dog howl: 'Send the Austrian dairy-maid back to Vienna!'"

"Oh, but that is only the canaille, the mob; and you know the mob howls always and everywhere."

But Dumesnil, leaning forward, said, impressively:

"My friend, it is this mob which will before very long rule at Versailles."

At this moment the conversation was startlingly interrupted. The shrill outcries of a female proceeded from the entry outside, then hurried footsteps approached, the door was flung open, and a pretty French girl, wringing her hands frantically, burst into the room.

"Help! Help my mistress!" cried she; and before a question could be put to her by the astonished group, darted out again.

With one impulse they hurried after the girl; Sir Philip at their head, and with the landlord following, the whole party bolted pell-mell into the little private parlor in which Mlle. Sainte Maur had been bestowed.

There, in the center of the room, her supple body bent over a magnificent Italian greyhound, her small white hands gripping the silver collar on its swollen neck, stood the young mistress of Clarise. The animal was struggling violently, and its glaring eyes and foaming mouth gave unmistakable signs of hydrophobia.

A cry of horror, hoarse and brief, and Sir Philip was at the dog's throat. Seizing it with both hands, he shouted to the panting girl:

"Let go, and fly!"

Instantly releasing her hold, she retreated a few steps, turned, and stood with heaving bosom and panting breath, her splendid eyes glittering with a strange



light, as she bent them fearlessly upon the dog and thence to the dark face of her rescuer.

Dumesnil and the rest would, of course, have rushed in to the assistance of Sir Philip, but it would have been useless. Imagine an enormous snake held at the throat by one man, while its powerful body writhes in a thousand convolutions, and changes its position every instant. The one vulnerable point is the throat; and if the hand that clasps it is displaced for the fraction of a second he is lost. Belmore, therefore, had warned them back, and repugnant though it was to obey, they saw that they would only endanger him the more by attracting the dog's muzzle away from him, since the powerful neck would then join with its body in those fearful and spasmodic wrenchings which rendered his hold upon it so precarious.

A quick and fierce movement of the hound's head flung the yellow foam from its grinning lips upon Belmore's cheek and brow. Unnoticed by him, the fatal virus was slowly trickling toward his eye, when, with a cry of dismay, the girl darted to his side, and plucking a handkerchief from her bosom, brushed away the drops with a quickness that equaled that of the hound, and sprang out of reach as its jaws closed within an inch of her arm.

Within that instant, for the dauntless act consumed no more, Belmore's eyes sought her's with an indescribable expression; but he only said, hoarsely:

"For God's sake, keep back!"

The efforts of the dog to release itself grew momentarily more furious. With eyes like living coals, its long, pointed fangs clashing together with demoniacal fury, it writhed and bounded, now on one side, now on the other, of the man who held its sinewy throat in a grip of iron. There was no possible chance afforded

any one to use a weapon, so lightning-like were its movements; but at last its fearful struggles ceased, with a suddenness that threw its whole weight upon the hand that held it; the blood burst from its flaming eyes, and the brute fell dead.

Gasping for breath, and pale from exertion, Sir Philip was about to draw his handkerchief from his pocket, when again the fair stranger glided toward him, this time unchecked, and with a quick and graceful motion, with her own dainty mouchoir wiped the dripping brow of her deliverer, murmuring as she did so, in a voice of singular sweetness:

"I thank you, Monsieur!" And she laid her hand softly in his, with all the eloquence of which that little member was capable, thus evincing her unspoken gratitude. Belmore's nervous palm closed over the slender fingers with a force that brought a pink flush into her wax-like cheeks.

We need not describe the rapidly varying emotions of the witnesses of or the actors in this exciting scene. Nor need we say that those experienced by Belmore were the most intense. Intense, indeed, and peculiar. For some seconds he stood aloof from the rest, without motion, his unwavering eyes drinking in the marvelous vision of beauty before him, his parted lips breathing in the subtle and strange perfume exhaled from her glorious hair and her soft gray drapery, his veins running fire from the kindling touch of her white hand as it lay warm and palpitating in his.

While Belmore, lost to everything save the sibylline form which filled his vision, stood gazing upon its fair outlines, his brothers gazed upon him wonderingly, mournfully. They knew only too well what fearful passions slept in his dark blood. Sometimes, in generations back, those passions had flamed up in the heart of a

stalwart knight or a stately dame of his house; and, whether exercised for weal or woe, with good or evil intent, those fiery energies had always consumed him or her. To Hubert and Ralph Meltham, who were unselfishly devoted to their brother, though of divided kinship, what they saw in his face now was what they had always dreaded to see. Often had Hubert, the graver of the two, said to his brother:

"Some day (and may it be a distant one) Philip will meet one of those rare and incomprehensible women who have the power to re-create a man by changing him into an angel or a devil. Then may God help him!"

Now, as he looked into the face of Sir Philip, his own face blanched; the soul of Belmore shone forth in every lineament; for the first time, and for all time, it had awakened.

The shuddering gaze of the brothers turned toward the woman, and still deeper emotions made their hearts tremble. With sentiments far different from those which agitated the bosom of their brother, they scanned every detail of her matchless form, the dazzling fairness of her face—the face of something strangely, vaguely familiar to them, surrounded now by disordered tresses of golden hair which rippled down from the head and brow of a goddess and crept about the creamy neck and shoulders of Juno-like contour; her eyes, large and azure blue, mingling the liquid sea and the serene sky in their baffling depths, while they looked fixedly into those of Sir Philip, with an expression to them, at least, incomprehensible. And gazing thus upon her, the brothers began to feel that indescribable fear that comes like an inspiration before a great danger or a great sorrow.

"She is a goddess," murmured Ralph, despairingly.



Hubert caught the word, started, and turning to his brother, exclaimed :

"A goddess? Yes, it is Diana herself!"

The brothers had seen at Athens the marble impersonation of the fair immortal, and here before them, filling them with awe, stood she, transformed, sentient, vivified and crowned with an aureate veil.

Thought is a rapid traveler; and, although to each one of the five participants in that absorbing scene enough had been revealed to create a bond between them, a bond that was destined to fearfully influence the lives of each, and to bring them again and again together during the enactment of a long and terrible drama, yet but a few brief minutes had sufficed for all this, when Helene Sainte Maur turned softly away and passed out of the room, with a mute sign to Clarise to follow her. Like a groping dreamer, Sir Philip also followed, without a word or glance at his brothers, or at Dumesnil who stood in the doorway.

The landlord had some time before gone for a servant to have the dead hound removed from the room; the two or three servants who had gathered in the hall during the struggle had gone off, and the two brothers and the Captain were left to themselves and their lugubrious reflections. They sat down in silence, eyeing each other. The face of the skipper expressed uneasiness and perplexity. Suddenly he gave vent to a mighty oath.

"Million thunders!" ejaculated he, bringing his ponderous fist down upon his knee with a terrible blow; "yes, it is so."

"Of what are you thinking, Monsieur?" inquired Hubert, anxiously regarding the giant.

"Gentlemen," responded he, speaking with emphasis,

"decidedly, Sir Philip is enchanted with Mademoiselle. I ask you if it is not so !"

The brothers, with flushed faces, answered, sorrowfully:

"Unfortunately, yes."

"So. And you think it is not singular, this astounding power which she has so suddenly acquired over his mind—his mind, mark you ?"

"It is certainly startling, Captain Dumesnil," confessed Hubert, "but it is altogether beyond our comprehension."

"Precisely; but not beyond mine," said Dumesnil, significantly. Then, with a mighty shrug, the giant uttered a sentence which caused the brothers to spring to their feet with a cry of dismay :

"Mademoiselle Helene Sainte Maur is a disciple of the man Mesmer !"

## CHAPTER III.

### THE FRENCH PACKET.

If "time and tide wait for no man," it is none the less true that men and ships must wait on both. Certainly, the commander of the French packet was compelled to do so; and not until six o'clock on the following morning did he bring his passengers in sight of the ramparts of Calais; thus giving point, as it were, to the irony of Monsieur Achille Dudevant.

During the waking hours occupied in crossing the boisterous strait, the worthy skipper had shown a taciturnity quite foreign to his genial nature, as Paul Cambray remarked to Hubert Meltham. "However," said he, in explanation, "he is making his last voyage in *La Charmante*; he is also about to retire from the sea altogether, having acquired enough to keep him independently the balance of his life. Well, do you see, he is naturally sad at the thought of so soon parting with his boat, and the breaking up of old associations."

But the brothers attached a more serious meaning to the grim silence of the Captain. Their own minds, harassed by gloomy and uneasy reflections, had become clarified; an effect invariably produced by trouble. Recollecting the discovery Dumesnil conceived he had made concerning Helene Sainte Maur's relations with the mysterious Mesmer (who was generally regarded as a master of the "black art," and held by many in dread or fear), they believed that this was weighing upon the commander's mind, as it certainly was upon their own. They felt, too, a premonition of coming misfor-



tunes which they did not attempt to define, and, without being able to explain why, they felt sure that their brother's infatuation must sooner or later land him in an abyss. And yet, they knew they would be powerless to avert this peril; and this knowledge added to their distress.

In the heart of a man of genius (and such a man was Sir Philip Belmore, as we shall attempt to show), imbued with intense passions not only of the heart but of the intellect, the love inspired by a woman possessing the same intellectual attributes, whether equal or not to his own, is profound, unconquerable, irresistible. If his genius is erratic, his character infirm, his nature wayward, his passions devour him and wreck the one to whom he gives himself. If, on the other hand, his character is firm, his nature lofty, he tempers the current, however powerful and swift it may be, so that it never becomes violent in its demonstration, never extravagant in its manifestation. The love of such a man as this can yield to the woman who possesses it happiness as unbounded as it is—before she has realized it—to her inconceivable.

It was such a character, such a soul, such a self-disciplined nature as this that Helene Sainte Maur was in search of. No other could mate with her; she could be content with no humdrum existence, such as the millions of fretting couples "enjoyed" because they could conceive of no better existence. From all such petty domestication—amounting simply to a partnership of little cares and big, and a doubling of petty burdens—she shrank away with the sensation of disgust.

To Hubert and Ralph Meltham this woman was indeed "rare and incomprehensible." All they knew of her was this, and all they saw was that Sir Philip had recognized her as the twin of his soul, from whom

nothing could ever separate him. Withal, the brothers were impressed with an unreasoning fear of that occult power which they believed Helene could at will exert over Sir Philip. It was the power that Circe used upon Ulysses; but neither supernatural nor—as science has proved—unexplainable. But, how could they baffle this awful power? they asked themselves. Ah, how indeed?

In their perplexity and distress they sought counsel with Felix Dumesnil. And Dumesnil proved a wise counselor, and more—a generous friend.

“Permit me to propose a plan, my friends,” he said, when they had found him in his snug little state-room; and as he spoke, his great black eyes beamed on them with honest sympathy. “A plan which you are to refuse, if it in the least interferes with your own wishes. It is this:

“When we arrive at Calais, I deliver my boat to an agent who will be there to receive it. I shall then be a ‘discharged mariner,’ and, with neither occupation, family nor kindred, I may go whither I will, and do whatever best suits me. Well, what is to prevent our taking apartments together in Paris and keeping together whilst you are in France, indeed? Mon Dieu, I know this Paris, I tell you, and since you do not, you would find the task of watching over your brother a difficult one, I warn you of that. Mon Dieu, it would be impossible.”

While Dumesnil was advancing this proposition, the eyes of the brothers betrayed the liveliest satisfaction. Grasping his enormous hand warmly, they declared that nothing could be more acceptable to them.

Dumesnil appeared pleased. “But, your brother?” queried he, a little doubtfully.

“We can answer for him,” replied Ralph, confidently. “It was only an hour ago that he expressed the hope that you might be induced to remain with us during our

stay in France. I will go to him at once, and inform him of our arrangement. Come you, also, Hubert." And, with a cordial good-night—for the midnight bells were sounding—the brothers departed to find Sir Philip.

Usually, on a journey of even a short duration, travelers are impatient to arrive at their destination, and will grumble at every delay. In the case of four, at least, of the passengers of *La Charmante*, this propensity was delightfully wanting. The tardy manner in which the smooth white hull plowed its way through the churning sea was amiably forgiven. As for Paul and Clarise, for instance, they had been making such rapid progress in each other's regards, that at the very moment the agreement had been reached in the Commander's room, an agreement which was to increase their own felicity, they were bidding each other a tender adieu, interjected with dolorous allusions to an early separation, and punctuated with frequent sounds like those produced when the lips of two amorous people come into hasty collision.

The more dignified, though much more earnest, discourse between the baronet and Helene had also continued until a very late hour, in the dim little cabin; and before they had separated, Belmore had learned from his fair companion as much as she could tell him of her future movements.

"I shall go to my hotel, in the Faubourg St. Germain," said she, "and shall remain there for a long time; probably until the unhappy disturbances in the provinces finally subside. I shall be delighted to see you often, and your brothers also."

"I shall not neglect your invitation, be assured of that," replied Sir Philip, earnestly; "and if I can obtain suitable quarters for myself and party in the vicinity, I shall do so."



"Oh, that will not be at all difficult. Indeed, I would advise you to do so. The Faubourg St. Germain is the most fashionable quarter in Paris. All the English reside there—your own people. Besides, it is near the opera; and I am sure you can obtain excellent apartments near the Café Conti—which faces the Pont Neuf, one of our most lively thoroughfares. The Café Conti, too, is one of the best in the city."

Sir Philip found his brothers awaiting him at the door of his state-room. He received the intelligence they brought with some surprise, but a great deal of satisfaction. He, as well as his brothers, had already become attached to the colossal skipper.

A bright sun was gilding the fortifications of the old French town of Calais when the packet entered the offing, and promised a perfect day for the journey toward the metropolis. With the exception of Hubert and Ralph, the party was in the best of spirits, and very patiently permitted the luggage to be rummaged at the "Bureau." Then, after procuring, by the advice of Dumesnil, "*un passe avant*" for each person, from a sour-faced functionary, they repaired to the Hotel D'Angleterre, then the favorite post-house at Calais, where they were served with an excellent breakfast.

Seated around the well-spread table "quite like a family party," as Mlle. Sainte Maur smilingly observed, our travelers entered with great animation into a general discussion of their several plans and expectations after their arrival at Paris. The joy of Paul, upon learning, as he now did, that the whole programme of the party seemed to have been arranged with special reference to the wishes and pleasure of himself and Clarise, was unbounded. He could not wait to finish his coffee before hurrying off to his no less delighted little confidante, to apprise her of their prospects.

At the conclusion of the meal the landlord was summoned, and the subject of conveyances broached. He informed them that they were especially fortunate in having arrived just at that time. He now had in the yard, he said, a fine berlin and four, a light two-wheeled chaise and pair, two thoroughbred saddle-horses, and several good cobs, all of which had come in the night before, bearing a large party of Englishmen who had brought them from the metropolis and had that morning started over. Everything, he added, was at the disposition of Mademoiselle and the gentlemen.

This information was received with delight.

"Nothing could suit us better," exclaimed Sir Philip, who, the happiest of all at that moment, was so soon to have his spirits dampened, and to find in his path a crested serpent which would follow after him through the most momentous portion of his existence.

"We will take everything," said he, after the matter was briefly discussed; "have all in readiness within an hour."

"And what shall we do with the hour?" inquired Mlle. Helene, gayly.

"Oh, pardon, there is the fortification and the citadel," suggested the landlord; "they are very strong."

"That is so," remarked Dumesnil, "and as there is very little else of interest to be seen in the town, suppose we use our hour in walking around the walls. But we shall find it more pleasant when we meet the gens d'armes there, if we wear the cockade—"

"Oh, I can supply them, Monsieur," and the accommodating landlord, who seemed to have everything at hand, disappeared from the room, returning presently with a number of those soiled cockades which were supposed to denote the loyalty of the person in whose hat they were seen.

After a circuit of the defenses, which consumed nearly an hour, our travelers again started toward the hotel. As they came in sight of it, a party of five gentlemen, evidently Frenchmen, each of whom was followed by a lackey carrying a leathern bag, rapidly approached the inn from the direction of the quay, and entered the inn-yard a little in advance of them. These personages, who had just arrived in a Dover boat now lying in the harbor, were evidently of some consequence in the eyes of the landlord, who met them with great deference, and who appeared to know the title of at least one of them.

This one, who was a trifle in advance of his companions, glanced quickly around the yard, and remarked to the one nearest him :

"Aha, you see that we are again fortunate to-day. We arrive before the Englishman leaves, and we find everything waiting for us." Then, to the landlord, who stood with his hat held nervously in his hand, "Sapristi, mine host, I congratulate you. You have provided well for us."

"What is this you say, my lord?" inquired the host, with a disturbed look.

"Come, come," exclaimed his Lordship, haughtily, "you do not listen well. We expected to travel those thirty-three posts to Paris on the backs of those sorry hacks which you usually have here, since we do not like the diligence; but these arrangements that you have made are much better."

"Decidedly so," echoed the second of the strangers, in a drawling tone.

The arrangements were certainly good. While this appreciative party was entering the yard, the postillions were bringing in the outfits for Sir Philip's party. A large berlin with four superb animals attached to it, a



light French chaise drawn by two fine roadsters, two powerful and spirited horses under saddle, and three sturdy cobs; such was the inviting display which greeted them.

In the booths of the two vehicles all the luggage had been snugly piled, and all that appeared to be necessary now was to pay the score and start on their journey.

But a quiet departure was not to be permitted them. As they approached the inn, the foremost of the strangers, who appeared to be the leader, exclaimed in a voice unnecessarily loud and irascible:

"Come, come, I tell you, be quick. We wish to be off."

"Pardon me, my Lord," returned the landlord, bowing nervously; "it would give me great pleasure, I swear to you—"

"To the devil with your 'pleasure,'" cried the other, angrily. "It is our pleasure we are considering, block-head. Why, then, do you not remove that luggage from the booths, so that our own may be packed in? Do you suppose that we intend to carry ballast?"

"But, my Lord Marquis," protested the now thoroughly distressed boniface, "positively, I have nothing left to provide you with. It would give me great pleasure, I do assure you, my Lord Marquis—"

"Sacre. A pest upon your 'pleasure,' I tell you! It will be my pleasure to have you kicked—to your 'sorrow' directly," shouted the now irate nobleman.

"But, *mon Dieu!*" repeated the host, desperately gesticulating with his crumpled hat; "I swear to you that I have nothing left."

"Nothing left! What do you call all this outfit, scoundrel?"

"Oh, certainly, my Lord Marquis, these are excellent arrangements, as you have been pleased to say; but these

guests have engaged everything, and here they are now ready to start, do you see. Oh, they will tell you, my Lord; it is true."

"Devil scorch your tongue!" vociferated the nobleman. "We want horses and vehicles, not words and excuses. And as these are ready and will serve our purpose exactly, we will take them."

And without a glance at Sir Philip Belmore or his companions, who by this time had come up and stopped to listen in silent amazement, the chief of the party ordered the lackeys to remove the luggage from the booths and place their own in its stead.

But as the menials started to obey this astonishing order Sir Philip stepped forward. The expression of his eye, as it rested for a moment upon them, boded no good either for themselves or their masters, and they stopped abruptly.

"Sir," said Sir Philip, composedly, addressing the Marquis, who turned quickly toward him with a menacing frown, "have you not been told that these equipages have been engaged for myself and people, and that this luggage is ours?"

"Pooh," retorted the other, sneeringly, while the scowl on his face deepened, "that is nothing to me."

The deliberate insolence of this reply was well calculated to rouse the lion in such a man as Belmore, and for a single moment the blood surged redly into his dark cheeks. But, like all men of strong character, he was master of himself the instant he reflected. His reply to this insulting speech, therefore, was quiet and firm:

"Nevertheless," said he, fixedly regarding the other, "it disposes of the whole question."

The handsome yet sinister countenance of the stranger flamed with passion. Evidently, he was one of those unfortunates who never acquire self-control, who

have little reverence and no love for anything that interferes with their own wishes. Instantly turning on his heel,

"Here, rascals!" cried he, gesticulating violently toward the lackeys, who had sullenly awaited the result of the colloquy; "do as I directed you, and be quick."

Again the men started toward the berlin; but before they reached it, a signal from Belmore brought the three English valets instantly to the spot. They were lusty fellows, and the eager light in their eyes eloquently expressed their willingness to contest the matter of dispute with the Frenchmen in their own peculiar way. Sir Philip's man Guppy, whose round and light blue eyes wore the stamp of honest good nature, immediately thrust his robust person between the lackeys and the side of the berlin, closely imitated and in perfect silence by his two sturdy fellows.

The five dependents of the Marquis' party were for a moment dumbfounded by this novel method of introducing hostilities; but they attempted to stand their ground, deeming it by no means difficult to do that much at least, since they were five to three.

Then began a series of pushings, elbowings, grimaces, puffings and gruntings, and sudden feints, between the disputants, so extremely ludicrous as to force a smile from even Sir Philip, which broadened approvingly as his rosy-faced follower, displaying a surprisingly fine set of teeth to the scowling enemy, said to them pleasantly:

"We're 'ere, gen'l'men! as the Juke o' Marlborough said to your Guv'nor of Montreuil."

Now, the taking of the French town by the English Duke was of too recent occurrence for Mr. Guppy's sarcasm to be received with indifference by the Marquis



and his friends. As for his Lordship, he turned pale with fury.

"Drive them off, you rascals, or I'll flay you!" shouted he to the five varlets who were vainly trying to push their three robust "interferences" away from the doubly coveted berlin.

"Don't be 'ard on 'em, me lud!" adjured the amiable Guppy, as he adroitly jammed the hat of his vis-a-vis; adding cheerfully, "these babbies, sir, they're wery soft."

But in spite of Mr. Guppy's generous advice to the Marquis, he immediately evinced a disposition to ignore it himself. For, urged to more decided action than merely pushing by the sanguinary threat of his Lordship, the lackeys now resorted to blows, the very first of which landed (such is the invariable return for favors shown!) squarely on the plump and comely cheek of the humane Guppy himself.

"Yours received—and there's a wery bad return, as the man said w'en he throwed up 'is wittals."

While delivering this observation, Guppy had also delivered a chin blow which sent his assailant under the wheels of the berlin, a place of refuge which he made no effort to leave.

"Give 'im one, Villiam! Bring yer shoulder for'ard w'en you 'it! Lay 'im down, Peter—it's all in fighting now, so don't reach for hanythink but 'eads, fellers!" shouted Jeems, as he proceeded to repeat the same operation on a tall fellow in front of him. For five minutes more there was a general mêlée, a lively bobbing of heads, a plunging of fists in the direction of the heads, and, as the last of the unlucky Frenchmen received his quietus from the invincible fist of the skilful Guppy, that fastidious champion gravely shook his very blonde head, and observed to Mr. Trotter, pathetically:

“They vas too soft, Villiam!”

The valets were victorious; and, satisfied of this, Sir Philip turned his attention to the feminine portion of his party. But, at the very beginning of the contest, Helene and her maid had retired to the parlor of the inn, accompanied by the landlord, who thus prudently left the settlement of the difficulty in the hands of his guests.

But, if the lackeys were rendered “hors de combat” by the valets, the difficulty was by no means settled, as the next chapter will show.

## CHAPTER IV.

THE MARQUIS OF B——.

With a contemptuous glance at his disabled servants who were ruefully mopping their bruised faces at the yard-pump, the obstinate nobleman turned to his companions and exchanged a few words with one of them. This one, a tall and bearded person of grave aspect, in turn conferred with the rest briefly. The result of their deliberations was soon apparent.

Each of the five was enveloped in a talma of black cloth, which entirely concealed his dress, as well as the side arms then invariably worn by gentlemen. The leader, however, now threw off his cloak as he advanced to the spot where Sir Philip stood calmly awaiting him. He wore a magnificent court-dress of buff velvet; the collar of his coat was decorated with orders emblazoned with jewels, and the sword at his hip was of the most exquisite workmanship. His bearing, now, was no longer that of a brawling cavalier, but that of the patrician.

"Sir," began he, in a voice totally different from its previous tone, but cold and passionless as his face now was, "it seems, then, that we must settle this affair ourselves."

Sir Philip's face exhibited a momentary surprise as he composedly surveyed the other. Then, bowing courteously, he said:

"If you consider yourself aggrieved, Monsieur, I am at your service."

"I thank you," returned the stranger, an indescrib-



able smile curving his lip for an instant ; "and as I do not desire that you continue in ignorance of my motives in seeking to chastise you, nor to permit you to suppose that I would offer to fight without knowing that my opponent was a gentleman, I will inform you that I know you to be Sir Philip Belmore ; and further, that the lady whom you are so fortunate as to have in your party is also well known to me, and it is because of her presence in your company that I have cut short my visit in London, followed you here, and taken the pains to interfere with your interesting arrangements."

This astonishing statement was received with looks of amazement by Sir Philip and his friends. But, before a word had been spoken by either of them, the Marquis, who had turned away, seemed to think that he had not, after all, been quite candid enough, for he immediately added to the general surprise by a further revelation.

"I will inform you, also, Monsieur," said he, returning a pace or two, "that I know to whom you were indebted for your introduction to the lady, and why so much interest was taken in your behalf. Achille Dudevant, a journalist of Paris, who is now in London gathering secret information for a parvenu gazette of the diplomatic movements on foot with reference to France and Austria, has reason to dislike me because I have denounced him to the Minister as a seditious person. For certain reasons, also, he has been led to believe that what he has done toward making you and Mademoiselle acquaintances and fellow-travelers, would seriously annoy me. Well, I shall in good time reward this Dudevant ; at present, I am interested in dealing with you !"

As the stranger concluded this extraordinary speech, he stepped back among his friends with a menacing

expression in his brown eyes, coolly folded his arms over his ruffled bosom, and awaited the effect.

Sir Philip had neither stirred nor spoken during this amazing address; but, as the Marquis ceased, his brow and cheeks suddenly burned with an intensity that seemed to scorch them, and then as instantly paled. An ominous light flamed into his eyes and remained there, as, advancing a step nearer, he demanded:

"And pray, sir, who are you? I care nothing for the tedious explanation you have taken the trouble to make; but I am somewhat inquisitive concerning the quality of a stranger who proposes to cross swords with me."

"Monsieur shall be fully informed," returned the Frenchman, haughtily. "I am the Marquis of B——, and I am attached to the Court of his Majesty Louis XVI."

Sir Philip bowed coldly, and, turning toward his brothers,

"These gentlemen are my brothers, Hubert and Ralph Meltham," said he; "they will act as my seconds."

"And," said the Marquis, presenting two of his companions, "these gentlemen are my friends, Messieurs, the Chevalier Vergiraud and the Viscount D'Artois, who will meet you at once."

The four seconds immediately withdrew to a private room in the hostelry, while Sir Philip, after another interchange of cool civilities with the pugnacious nobleman, proceeded to the public parlor alone, there to await the consummation of the arrangements for the first duel he had ever been called to fight. It was not to be the last time, however, that he was to draw his sword in France.

He had not expected to find any one in the public parlor of the inn; but as he crossed the threshold he found himself face to face with Helene Sainte Maur.

She stood in the center of the room, as if awaiting him; and as he approached her hesitatingly, her eyes sought his with a mystical look in them, and her voice had in it a gentleness, a sadness of tone that sounded exquisitely, infinitely sweet.

"You are about to fight a duel!"

"Why do you think so?" demanded he, stopping abruptly.

"I know it," she returned, in the same tone, and she held out her hand to him, which he took in both of his, feeling the quick pulse in the delicate fingers with a strange thrill, as he gazed at her with silent yearning.

"You know it," he repeated, in a low tone; "in that case there is nothing to be said—except, that if I fall, you will attend my obsequies."

Helene moved her head expressively. "It will not be you who will fall," she said, gravely.

Belmore smiled. "You speak very confidently," said he; "and yet my antagonist can not be a novice in the use of a gentleman's weapons."

"Nevertheless," replied she, with strange emphasis, "it is he who will fall." Then, as if to herself, "It is most unfortunate."

Belmore started. He recalled the words of the Marquis:

"This Marquis is well known to you," he suddenly exclaimed, gazing at her moodily.

For a moment she looked fixedly at him, while he strove hopelessly to read her thoughts through her fathomless eyes. As for his own, he saw that to her they were as the printed page of an open book, and his conscious gaze drooped.

With a sigh scarcely audible, she said, slowly turning her own gaze toward the window through which the morning sun came in bars of red gold:



“Yes, this Marquis is known to me. Less than a year ago he met me at the Court at Versailles. Afterwards he visited me at my chateau at Paris. I received him as I received others. Four months ago I left for the summer tour which I usually make. He followed me everywhere. I met him in the Alps, at Brussels and in London. He was at the Minister’s ball, and saw you introduced to me by the former private secretary of my deceased father, and I observed a flash of anger in his eyes at the moment. Before I left London he came to me with an audacious threat that he would certainly prevent it if I attempted to travel to Paris in your company; that it was an impropriety, and so on. I informed him at once that I knew quite enough of your antecedents to feel perfectly at ease with your chaperonage, and was not disturbed about the conventionalities. Then I requested him to leave me, and to consider our acquaintance finally ended. He professes to love me, but that does not interest me in the least.”

She paused, and for some time was silent. She seemed to be musing. Her fair head, draped in its splendid hair, drooped while she thought, until the ivory-like chin rested upon her bosom. Then the golden head was flung backward, her eyes flashed with a light that to Belmore appeared supernal her voice vibrated like the chords of a harp :

“Do you know what such men are to me?” exclaimed she, laying her hand that quivered with suppressed feeling upon his arm. “Men? Ah, men only in their own conceit. They imagine, these poor pigmies in thought, that it is nothing—the empire over a woman’s heart. Little monsters, they assume, with all the effrontery of ignorance, to sit where only the master should be found, not the imposter. Ah, how often have I listened (because I could not escape from it) to their

dull gossip, to their wearisome platitudes, to their senseless declamation! And always on a subject they are hopelessly incapable of comprehending—Love. Heavens! with what disgust I have watched them while they groveled. All their baseness of spirit, all their despicable and puny stratagems, all their half-concealed selfishness—these despicable traits and motives and impulses have driven me back into myself a thousand times, and I emerge each time with a stronger, more mournful conviction that for me, at least, there is no companionship.”

“Ah, my friend, you are merciless!” murmured Belmore. But, as he watched the beautiful face made transcendently so by the profound emotions induced by her reflections, he began dimly to comprehend her—this woman who at first had filled him with dread even while his heart went out to her.

“Merciless, do you say?” she answered him, her scarlet lips parting with a smile that was bitter. “Ah, if you only had a woman’s penetration, with a woman’s opportunities to judge your sex—no, not your sex, but its boasted representatives—you would not say that I am merciless, but that I am just. I insist that the man who is not by nature or education mean and cowardly, is a *rara avis*, indeed.”

“But you admit, then, that there are men of noble natures and intellects, what of them?” asked he, earnestly.

“Oh, yes, there are men who are not moral assassins, I grant you that poor solace. But, do you tell me that you know them? Do you know what constitutes such an one? Well, he must be a strong man, full of human passion self-repressed, full of grand ideas, of grand impulses, and capable of grand actions. Oh, such a man

would be masterful, indeed, because of the greatness of his soul, the humanity of his heart."

"And if he were found?"

"I would worship him!" she answered, with a gesture, a look, an intensity that electrified him.

"But do not think," she continued, slowly, "that I would yield to him at first. No, he should first convince my reason that he was greater of soul, greater of intellect than I. He must be lord of himself to be lord to me. Then, only, would I bow before him and confess him master. Not abjectly, not humbly, but as a queen receiving her consort. Yes, there would be a struggle between him and me for supremacy—over myself. A struggle, perhaps, fatal to him, or to both of us."

"And if he conquered?" demanded Belmore, breathlessly.

"If he conquered," she answered, deliberately, "I should yield; I should be his absolutely, irrevocably."

Belmore leaned his head upon his hands, deep in thought, his brain in a tumult, his heart throbbing fitfully. At last he moved uneasily and said, gravely:

"You have an ideal; think you it will ever embody itself in flesh and blood?"

Helene sighed again, as she turned her eyes dreamily upon him.

"Only Time, that sole unerring logician, can answer you—and me."

Thus she answered him. Then, with a quick movement that wafted the nameless perfume from her golden hair into his face, she rose and passed swiftly from the room, leaving him involved in a chaos of maddening speculation.

It was thus his brothers found him when they came to recall him to the serious business in which he was so soon to engage. Rousing himself from his abstraction



with an effort, he inquired, almost with indifference, as they seated themselves:

“What is the time fixed for it?”

“Six o’clock—at sunrise to-morrow,” Hubert replied, quietly.

“So long to wait?” remarked Sir Philip, complainingly; “and the place of the meeting? I trust it is in a retired quarter.”

“It is at Boulogne,” explained Ralph, checking Sir Philip’s exclamation of annoyance and surprise. “Yes, it must take place there. Boulogne is the third post-town on our road to Paris. There is an excellent inn there, Vergiraud says, called the Red Lion, where we can obtain ample accommodations for all our people. The Marquis and his party will be obliged to travel by the stage-coach, which consumes seven days between Calais and Paris; therefore he will not be able to reach Boulogne until to-night. At sunrise to-morrow, then.”

“And the weapons?”

“Swords, of course. Fortunately, we have in our luggage the pair you bought from the old fellow in Cordova. They are exactly alike, of the same length and weight and perfectly tempered. We have shown them to Vergiraud and D’Artois, and they are delighted with them. Therefore, they will be used.”

Sir Philip nodded his approval of these arrangements, and, rising abruptly, observed:

“We will set out at once.”

In a few minutes all was bustle in the yard of the inn; postillions and postboys trooped into the space, escorting the redoubtable Guppy and his bold lieutenants; and in half an hour the cavalcade was leaving the scene of its first adventure far behind it.

As Sir Philip leaned back comfortably against the

padded leather of the berlin, he turned to Helene with a smile:

“I think I am starting out finely,” observed he; “I have been in France just four hours; in that time I have made extraordinary progress, it seems to me. I have already involved our servants in a broil with nearly twice their number, and myself in an affair that must certainly terminate seriously to one of us, at least, with one of the King’s suite.”

“And one who has some reputation as a duelist,” remarked Helene, gravely. “But,” she added, with an assuring smile, “I have told you that he is about to lose it.”

## CHAPTER V.

### THE DUEL-GROUND AT BOULOGNE.

The air of Boulogne, always moist and sodden, was unusually thick and disagreeably cold on the morning of the duel. The sun rose dull and red, a huge ball suspended behind a curtain of gray.

The spot selected for the meeting was in that quiet residence portion of the old bourg known as "high town," and in the vicinity of an old convent, on the edge of a grove of trees. The ground had been well chosen; it was firm and even, and the perfect isolation of the place ensured privacy.

At a quarter before six three carriages approached the woods from the direction of the populous "lower town," and, stopping only long enough to deliver seven persons on the ground, were rapidly driven beyond the grove, where they again halted and there remained.

Each of the party was wrapped in a sombre roquelaure, and wore a soft beaver drawn down over the eyes. As soon as the carriages were out of sight they removed their hats and cloaks, and disclosed the features of the principals, their seconds, and a tall, dark personage who carried in his hand one of those small leathern cases used by physicians and surgeons. This gentleman, who appeared to be perfectly at home in such matters, deposited his case with grave deliberation against a tree, and turned to the others, who awaited his movements in silence.

"Select the ground, gentlemen," said he to the seconds.



"An easy task," remarked D'Artois, with a light laugh, as they proceeded to pace the strip; "this bit of earth has drank a score of times from the veins of Frenchmen, although this is the first opportunity it has had to taste the quality which an Englishman's yield."

The rather questionable taste of this jest received no notice from Sir Philip or his brothers.

Again came the order from the surgeon:

"Take your weapons, Messieurs."

The Cordovan swords, borne by Ralph Meltham in a curiously carved box, were once more carefully inspected, the choice of selection being given to the Marquis' side.

The deep and sombre voice of the surgeon followed:

"Take your places, gentlemen."

Both men, who had divested themselves of their coats, waistcoats and cravats, immediately faced each other.

The positions of the combatants were some ten feet from the edge of the woods and parallel with the line of the trees, the thick and lofty foliage of which effectually prevented the chance rays of the sun from reaching the spot selected.

And now, these two who, until yesterday, were absolute strangers to each other, but in whose breasts an antagonism as bitter as if it had been engendering there for years was rankling, stood opposed in a contest which one, at least, determined should be to the death. As for the determination of the other—it will be revealed by what he did.

The seconds had performed the last duties required of them—until the fall of one or both of their respective chiefs, and had retired a few paces. The surgeon, folding his arms, and with his back to a tree at the skirt of the grove, stood for a moment silent, observant, and

imperturbable. Then his lips, which in repose were always rigidly set, parted.

"Are you ready?" came the last question, at once significant and terrible.

"Yes," was the stern answer from both.

"Then—begin!"

There was no dramatic dropping of hat or handkerchief for signal; only those three crisp syllables, grimly spoken.

Instantly the hilts of both weapons rose to the level of the eyes that looked into each other so coldly and so pitilessly, and the two blades met in a "St. Andrews cross" above their heads. Then they parted—to come together at the flanks. And now they darted like zig-zag lightning, hither, thither, around the bodies and heads of the combatants; but, instead of groans, sounds like the perpetual falling of steel chains followed, instead of blood—sparks of fire.

For interminable minutes there was a bewildering repetition of guards, feints, parries, and rapid thrusts; and then the men stepped back to regain their breath.

So far as it appeared to the eye, they were singularly well matched. Of the same height, with the same reach of arm; broad of chest and narrowing at the hips; with well turned limbs and supple in wrist and ankle, an experienced swordmaster would have pronounced them admirable antagonists.

Thus far, too, they appeared equal in point of skill; that is to say, both had proved themselves accomplished swordsmen, and neither had as yet obtained any advantage over the other, or given a wound.

For the space of a minute, while the duelists rested, all sounds had ceased except their quick and deep respirations. But now they have again advanced, and again

the ring of the hungry steel echoes ominously through the solemn woods.

Suddenly the impassive surgeon leans forward and fixes his eyes upon Sir Philip's face, which he watches as if he were witnessing some startling phenomena. The seconds, too, creep forward a pace, as they also look on, with astonishment, with awe.

What is it they see?

Sir Philip's face was undergoing a singular transformation. His lips, merely closed before, now were rigid; so tightly were they pressed together that the blood was driven back from them, leaving them as white as his brow. But a dark red spot burned in either cheek and remained there, neither fading nor deepening. It was the Saxon blood in his veins, the placid flow of which had changed to a current of fire. The deep-set eyes, that until now had shone only with stern determination, began to dilate. Brighter and brighter they grew, as if lit by a lurid torch from within. His aspect and manner now were those of a gladiator. Quicker and fiercer darted the blue steel in his hand. Now it hovered over his adversary's heart, and it seemed certain to find a fatal entrance there; now it came straight at the bared white throat; then it darted away and fanned the curling locks, as it circled like an aureole around the doomed head.

Doomed indeed, it seemed.

The panting breath of the Marquis warned his friends that he was giving way. With consummate skill he had parried every stroke, anticipated every thrust—thrusts withdrawn, however, before they touched his body, by the iron hand which, plainly enough now, was for some mysterious purpose deliberately wearing him out. For some time now, the Marquis had ceased to offer a thrust or return a stroke, but confined himself to mere defense.

Plainly, he could do nothing more ; Sir Philip's sword was everywhere at the same instant ; it was gripped by a hand as elastic as a woman's ; a wrist as supple as the neck of a serpent directed it ; but the soft white skin of that hand and wrist covered ligaments of steel. Thrice he could have disarmed his adversary, thrice he might have given him a home-thrust that would have stilled his turbulent heart forever, and still, with a smile on his white lips which none who saw it understood, he forbore—and waited.

For what?

The five spectators of this singular combat were asking this question of themselves, and finding no answer. They had scarcely stirred, so deep was their absorption, so breathless their interest, as they watched the terrific play of Belmore's sword. Only once the surgeon, roused out of his impassability, muttered:

“Pouf! This wizard has put life into his sword.”

But the combat was now soon to be terminated ; and in a manner secretly intended by Sir Philip from the first, although totally unsuspected by the spectators.

The manner of the Marquis during the combat had undergone several changes. At the first he was as cool and passionless as his antagonist, yet arrogant and contemptuous. As the latter began to display his skill the contemptuous sneer disappeared, and a look of surprise succeeded. Then the patrician face became grave ; and finally the color began to leave it. As he found himself more and more at the mercy of his antagonist he grew deathly pale, his respiration became more and more painful, his breath coming at last in fitful gasps. His emotion was that of shame, not fear ; and his dark eyes glittered with all the bitter rage of desperation, hate and humiliation. He began to stagger, to reel ; and his lips



ironed blood. Plainly, it was time to bring matters to an end.

The end was very near.

The sword of Sir Philip had become instinct with motion. But now it played always about the face of the nobleman, who soon exhibited signs of hopeless bewilderment, as the terrible blade perpetually flashed into his eyes. Step by step, not advancing, but circling around him, Belmore pressed him closer and closer until his hot breath could be felt upon his cheek. Suddenly, using the weapon as a poniard, he thrust the point downward at the hilt of the other, withdrew it as suddenly, and the Marquis of B—— staggered back without a weapon.

Both the Cordovan swords were in the hands of Sir Philip.

With a taunting smile on his lips, he held forth the one he himself had used, and said:

“I have taught you something with this; take it and try its temper on your lackeys.”

The five witnesses of the duel, supposing it ended, had started forward. But they stopped; every word of this cutting speech had been heard by them; and, dismayed, dumbfounded, they stood and stared at the Marquis. The latter, roused to frenzy by the insult, the object of which will hereafter be understood, ground his teeth. Then, forgetting or overcoming his exhaustion, seized the extended weapon, and, springing back into position, shouted hoarsely:

“On you first, then!” and lunged madly at the breast of his enemy. But the sword which had been so easily wrested from the hapless nobleman proved quite as terrible as its twin. The vicious thrust was as easily turned aside, a counter-thrust was offered as a feint, merely, which caused the Marquis to swerve so that he

presented a perfect profile to his watchful foe. Instantly the sword of Belmore was shortened, and the Marquis, deceived by the movement which had before deprived him of his own weapon, lowered his head. A swift pass at the exposed face, straight across it and obliquely upward, and, with a despairing cry, unlike that of either fear or pain, the Marquis of B—— dropped his weapon, covered his face with his hands, and fell to the ground. When his friends reached him, the blood was trickling in dark streams through his fingers, and he had fainted.

Without removing his hands, they lifted him up, and bore him toward the convent.

The instant Sir Philip had given the coup de grace to his adversary, he stepped quickly past the prostrate body, and, without being observed by any one, picked from the ground some small object which he hastily placed in his handkerchief, and deposited in a pocket of his coat. Then, without a glance at the fallen man, and grasping his garments as he strode on, he signed to his brothers, and disappeared in the grove, in the direction of his carriage.

Half an hour afterwards, Sir Philip and his party were moving rapidly along the road toward Paris.

## CHAPTER VI.

### PARIS IN 1788.

The physical appearance of the Paris of one hundred years ago was as different from the Paris of to-day as our own magnificent Capital is different from the Washington of a quarter of a century past. In each case, the necessity for extensive urban improvements at the eleventh hour stirred the ambition and supplied the courage of one man whose genius was equal to the task of rehabilitation, renovation and recreation. To be a public benefactor is to invite martyrdom; and in the case of both Hausmann and Shepard, martyrdom was the reward. Execrations, persecutions, contumely, assailed them from behind the barricades of the press, that coward's refuge of a licensed malefactor; after which the public proceeded to enjoy to the utmost those grand benefactions, and with quite as much complacency as if it had not senselessly and cruelly denounced their authors and sought to ruin them, and with no more remorse than the savage brutes of the jungle would exhibit.

The streets of Paris, as our travelers found them, were narrow, crooked, badly paved and filthy lanes, except in a few neighborhoods—notably those of the Faubourgs ("clusters of houses," etc.), Sts. Honore and Germain, which were then the ultra-fashionable quarters. Lanterns, suspended from hooks attached to tall poles, at the intersections of the streets, were the only illuminators; and their rays could be seen for scarcely the distance of a hundred yards, twinkling dimly,

and "making the darkness visible." No female, from a child of twelve to a dame of fifty, unless deformed, or whose ugliness rivaled that of the Witch of Endor, dared venture alone on an isolated street after sunset; and it was decidedly unsafe for any well-dressed man to traverse them after dark without a companion or two, as well as with trusty weapons. Collisions were constantly occurring in deserted ways between "gentlemen" (the term was not so well understood at that period as at this), or between some impudent bourgeois and lurking foot-pads, who burrowed during the day in the great sewers.

The houses or residences of the nobility and gentry were designated "hotels," "chateaux," "palaces," etc. Some of these were of such immense size, and of such elaborate arrangement, as to justify titles so pretentious. Such was the residence of Helene Sainte Maur, into which we are about to introduce the reader. It was a spacious stone structure, built by a feudal ancestor, who had need of many apartments for his retainers, and sumptuous and elegant chambers for his numerous guests. The last lineal descendant of this forgotten great-grandsire, Helene felt for the antique mansion a peculiar reverence, and could never be persuaded to either dispose of it or change its strange interior. The chateau, as it was properly called, was a short distance west of the now spacious Boulevard of St. Michel, south of the Seine where the river is crossed by the Pont de Neuf, and not far from the Palais du Luxemburg.

Immediately upon her arrival in Paris, Helene repaired to the chateau, and summoned her servants who had been sent away as usual during her absence, and in a few days was fairly "at home."

As for Sir Philip and his friends, they had profited



by Helene's advice, and had secured admirable and elegant quarters in the vicinity of the Café Conti, then one of the best resorts for gentlemen that could be found in the metropolis. They dined and had their suppers at the café, but their breakfasts were served at their apartments.

By the first of December Sir Philip and his brothers had become familiar with the principal localities and thoroughfares of the city, and were as much at home as the natives, thanks to the guidance of the amiable Dumesnil. The latter had at first evinced a disposition to mope a little at the beginning of his new and somewhat over-peaceful life—which was soon to be exactly the reverse—but the occupation of guide to three such active and observant companions soon dispelled this feeling, and he had now become the most cheerful and agreeable of comrades.

Sir Philip, no less than his brothers, was surprised at the station occupied by Helene Sainte Maur in the social world of Paris. She was, indeed, one of its queens, as he very soon discovered. As soon as it was generally known that she had returned, and that her chateau in the aristocratic Faubourg had once more opened its great carved doors, friends and acquaintances poured through them like an inundation. She was widely known and cordially liked, and her acquaintances were innumerable. Her friends, her "familiar," were of a different class from the butterflies of the gay monde. They were the brilliant men and women of that remarkable period, when intellect seemed to have been put in harness, that it might be driven at race-horse speed, which the exciting political discussions, intrigues, reform clubs, and schools of philosophy demanded. Mademoiselle's receptions, dinners and coteries drew these people as a powerful magnet draws; and, like the

magnet, infused into them its subtle aura the moment they entered her elegant drawing-rooms.

Callers of both sexes, the beau monde of Paris, fairly monopolized her during the daytime, and encroached upon her evenings; and it was seldom that Sir Philip had the happiness of an hour's interview with her, uninterrupted by others. It almost invariably happened, when he called, that some one else was either arriving or leaving, so that an evening with her alone was scarcely possible.

During one of these rare and precious tête-à-têtes, when he had found her alone in a delightful little room near her pretty garden, she gave him a glimpse of her proposed mode of life, the duties she had assigned to herself upon her return, and her inclinations and purposes. It had greatly surprised him and had rendered him uneasy. She was apparently wholly absorbed in her plans, and Sir Philip thought that she had undertaken a task at once formidable and dangerous. She was intimate with the chiefs of the Gironde, whom she charged with extravagant theories, doctrines, and tendencies.

"These people are full of impracticable notions of government," she said, as she faced him in her favorite lounging chair, a fauteuil of white and grey velvet, while he looked at her wonderingly.

"It occurs to me," remarked Belmore, "that your Girondists are preparing to play in earnest the part of Zeus, who, after emptying Pandora's box of plagues upon the world, was necessarily dissatisfied with the condition it was left in, and sought to overturn the world and create it anew."

"Ah, I see you have been at the keyhole," returned Helene, with a pleased smile. "Yes, these people are dangerous from their very innocence. There is Roland;

he is purely Utopian. He has an insane idea that capital and labor can be made to fraternize, and that can never be. Bring them together in a community of interests, a 'co-operative community' it is called, and you have only brought together the materials for a conflagration. The secret reason is that brains are forever struggling, scheming, longing to dominate brawn; and wherever these brains exist a head rises above the sweating ranks, demands largesse from capital, and, if it is refused, incites revolt among the proletariat. And then, again, these sentimental friends of mine are teaching a new so-called religion. Oh, they call it philosophy; but it is simply a bundle of vagaries, calculated to confuse weak or ignorant minds, and lead them finally into believing nothing at all. Only yesterday, while I was passing the Sorbonne, two lean and pale young students coming from different directions, stopped abruptly, stared at each other like two idiots, and one exclaimed:

"My friend, are you very sure that you have any knowledge of anything? Are you certain that you know what is knowable?" And the other replied:

"Mon Dieu, my friend, what we thought was knowledge was after all only superstition."

"Then, with a shrug and another idiotic stare in the direction of the antipodes, they went abruptly on their way. You can see, can you not, to what all this imbecility must lead?"

"Skepticism," said Sir Philip, tersely.

"Yes, that first, and then infidelity. After infidelity—anything."

For an interval, he sat watching her serious face, noting her absorbed manner, and his brows betrayed the moodiness of his thoughts.

"Well," said he, "do you imagine that you can combat all these imbecilities? There are at least one

hundred thousand incurables in this uneasy capital, and the disease is spreading. What can you do to arrest it?"

"Oh," returned she, smiling at his lugubrious expression, as well as at his words which implied her weakness, "there are only a score of those thousands, and out of that formidable multitude there are less than a score upon whom it is necessary to operate."

"I should like to see them," reflected Belmore, recalling something he had heard of Danton, who was then beginning to be talked of. As if she read his thoughts, she exclaimed:

"You wish to see them. Well, come to my fête next Wednesday evening—you will receive cards for it tomorrow, and you shall see some, perhaps all, of these griffins."

"Ah, that will be a rare pleasure," responded he, brightening at the prospect of meeting her intimate friends, and judging them—for his own sake.

"Then I shall expect you. There are cards, too, for your brothers, and for that good-natured giant whom you carry about. Do you know that he literally encircles me, when we chance to meet, with those great eyes of his? Do not fail to bring him; I shall have another giant to converse with him—Danton."

At the sound of that name Belmore started; he had heard of him as an admirer of Mlle. Sainte Maur, but he had not heard of the orator's ugliness.

He left the chateau with thoughts that profoundly disturbed him. He knew the perturbed state of that vast and dangerous majority known as the "People," and when Helene told him confidently that the kingly prerogative itself was in jeopardy from the latent discontent of these masses, he felt no surprise. And if an *emeute* followed? What an arena this Paris would be for a woman—such a woman as Helene Sainte Maur.



Far greater would be her peril, he knew, than that of any other, except the Queen. She would be a conspicuous mark for envy, for malevolence, even for the assassin.

The night of the fête arrived, and with it a deluge of rain. But in despite of this discouraging visitor, Sir Philip's party found some difficulty in passing through the crowded entrance. The drawing rooms, the banquet hall, the library, and even the pavilion, were all in a plethoric state, and still being fed from the inexhaustible procession of vehicles of every description that were making their momentary pause at the end of the canvas awning outside.

This spectacle was to Hubert and Ralph Meltham a revelation, and they entered the dazzling salon with a sudden revulsion of feelings, until this moment obstinately entertained, of the fair Parisienne. She received them with a grace that was inimitable; and their prejudices were swept away forever. Then, as they saw the adulation that followed her from every eye in that splendid assemblage, they asked themselves if, after all, Dumesnil had not been mistaken about her having been the pupil of the impostor Mesmer? Or if, indeed, the teacher of such a woman could be the charlatan they had been led to believe him. Before the evening had grown old, they had freely confessed to each other that among her sex this woman stood peerless. Still, their uneasiness on their brother's account was not in the least abated by this change of feeling, of opinion toward her. So brilliant a woman, wondrously endowed with intellectual power which every one seemed to acknowledge, of such superlative beauty and grace, courted by the noblest of her own countrymen, capable of wielding, and doubtless able to secure, a sceptre, if she chose, was a prize more than difficult of attainment; and how-

ever they admired their brother for his indisputable superiority over other men, they believed his chances of success in the contest for the heart of this goddess few—nay, desperate. And yet they had noted her manner toward Sir Philip during the evening; they had seen her observing him with a watchfulness of expression which seemed to imply a hope that he would compare well with those around him who were vying for a tithe of the attention she bestowed upon him. And Hubert thought that he saw once a fleeting look of proud pleasure in her eyes as she listened to a little discussion between Sir Philip and Malesherbes, in which the former made a brilliant impression even upon the venerable jurist.

The fête was over. It had been pronounced by the elegant habitués of the best salons of Paris an “ovation,” a “delight,” and a “climax.”

At three o'clock Sir Philip's party entered their carriage; and Hubert, who recollected with amusement with what a demure air the colossus had received the enchanting attentions of Mademoiselle, inquired slyly :

“Come, Captain, you are positively the only guest who has not expressed an opinion of our delightful hostess.”

And Dumesnil, making a deprecatory gesture with his enormous hand, growled under his huge moustache :

“Dame ! I am of the opinion that she ‘mesmerized’ me.”

## CHAPTER VII.

### CLARISE DECHAMP.

The most favored member of Mlle. Sainte Maur's household was Clarise Dechamp, the confidential maid whom we have already introduced.

Clarise was the only daughter of a poor tradesman; and therefore belonged to that class of females called vaguely "grisettes." An ancient edict had declared black, white, and the gayer colors, to be consecrate to royalty, the nobility, and the gentry; and the wives and daughters of certain classes of citizens, including those of the shopkeeper, were required to wear gray dresses and robes, etc. From the color of their gowns, therefore, these honest women received the soubriquet "grisette." The definition of the term had at length become exceedingly vague, and its origin forgotten. It was now applied generally to girls who earned their own living. There were many honest grisettes, of course; but the average grisette counted herself quite as virtuous as the "grande dame," if she contented herself with one lover at a time. Clarise, let us hasten to say, was not so easy minded as these; and, previous to her acquaintance with Paul Cambray, she had only indulged herself in brief coquetries with her quondam and beardless acquaintances. But whatever the affinity between herself and him, they were neither of them long in discovering it. Their natures were, it is true, decidedly different. Clarise was a girl of remarkably shrewd and active intelligence, an adventurous and bold disposition; Paul, on the contrary, was somewhat shallow, egregiously

conceited, by no means quick of apprehension, but he was affectionate, had excellent taste, and was very good looking. These were exactly the "properties" which the grisette (of Clarise's type) most appreciate. Faithful, affectionate, provident, and with true maternal instincts which required some one to look after and to care for, she found in this "boy," as she was pleased to think of him, just what her nature and character seemed to require. A mutual attachment soon followed, and for the first time in her young life Clarise said to herself:

"Mon Dieu, what would the poor boy do without some one to take care of him, in this great Paris? It was all very well while he was a clerk on a channel packet, under the arm of that good Monsieur Dumesnil. But now it is different. He is a bank clerk in the City, and he must be looked after, and he must be always careful of his habits. Besides, he is a good fellow, and he loves me."

Paul's lodgings were, thanks to a little clever management, not very far from the Sainte Maur<sup>t</sup> residence; and thither Clarise went every morning, after the completion of her mistress' toilet, to put his rooms in order, and bring away any garment which needed a stitch or a button. These duties she had cheerfully imposed upon herself, and she fulfilled them with unfailing regularity.

Two or three evenings in the week the young people spent together. Sometimes they visited the play; but usually, when the weather was fair, they enjoyed strolling back and forth in a charming little street which has long since been absorbed by the Jardin des Plantes, or lingering in the moonlight on the Pont des Tournelles, a quiet bridge which led over to beautiful Ile St. Louis.

During one of these walks, on an unusually mild evening in which the breath of summer seemed infused,



notwithstanding the season, Paul had been for some time moodily silent, and Clarise had been silently observing him. At length, he said to her, with a little brusquerie:

"Clarise, it is highly probable that I shall have an affair of honor on my hands, shortly."

Clarise looked up quickly and peered into his face. She had refrained from asking him the cause of his taciturnity; but, with her usual tact, she had tried to dispel it by her cheerful manner and conversation, until she saw that talking annoyed him; then she became as silent as he. She very well knew he would end by telling her the cause of his moodiness; but she certainly did not expect anything like the communication he had just made. It startled her a little; but she replied very quietly:

"An affair of honor; a duel. That is serious."

But Paul had expected an outburst of grief, of alarm.

"Mon Dieu!" cried he, indignantly; "do you care no more about it than that? 'Serious,' indeed! Well, I should say it was."

Clarise raised her star-like eyes to his, and with her little pink finger-tips pressed his arm reassuringly. In a soothing voice she said:

"Tell me all about it."

Certainly, this was exactly what Paul had been desiring to do for the space of an hour. He therefore began, in a most dramatic manner, to relieve his mind of his trouble, and—as a man always will—to burden hers with it.

A young flaneur (that is, one of those idlers who are eternally found lounging on the boulevards in the search of frivolous adventures) had been introduced to Clarise at the theatre Comedie Francaise some weeks previously

by Paul, whom he had known for some time. It was a masquerade affair, and he had seen little more than her sparkling eyes. He had made several futile attempts to induce her to meet him afterwards; and, being an insufferably conceited fellow, her refusal to reply to his notes had piqued him greatly.

While Paul was on his way to the chateau that evening, to take Clarise out for their usual promenade, this person had met him in the Boulevard St. Germain. His face was flushed from wine, his temper decidedly irritable. Stopping in front of Paul, he said:

"Good evening, my friend, you seem to be in a prodigious hurry?"

And as Paul politely bowed to him and attempted to pass on, the fellow called out to him, in a bantering tone:

"Bah, I know where you are going; but I have my eye in the same direction!"

"At that," said Paul, "I turned back to him. 'I do not understand you, Monsieur,' said I.

"'Oho, that is it,' returned he, with a sneer; 'we are very innocent, are we not? Well, then, that pretty girl you call Clarise does not care a fig for you, my friend. When you presented me to her, she gave me a look out of her black eyes which delighted me, but made me feel at the same time sorry for you. Her black eyes. Yes, they are very black, indeed, and very expressive.'

"With that he made a grimace, and looked at me hard. I began to understand him. 'What do your words imply, D'Artivan?' I demanded. 'What was it you saw in her eyes?'

"D'Artivan laughed insolently, and replied: 'Oh, they said very plainly, this Monsieur Paul Cambray is a truckling ass; he is excessively tiresome. Come and see me! And I have had the pleasure of seeing her a

number of times since then, I might as well inform you, and she decidedly prefers me to you.”

“Ah the wretch,” cried Clarise, now decidedly aroused. “He has seen me two or three times, behind a closed window of the chateau, when he was lounging in the street opposite, that is all; and I am quite certain he would not even know me if he should meet me again. But what reply did you make to him?”

“The fellow had been drinking, and it had made him foolish, as it always does. So I said to him:

“‘Look here, D’Artivan, you have insulted me, but since you are drunk I will take no notice of that. But you have also insulted the lady whom you have taken the liberty to name, and since she is my honored friend you shall answer to me for it.’ Then, in a twinkle, he became serious, and, tapping, his rapier hilt bravely, he told me where to find him, if I wanted him. And then,” concluded Paul, furiously, “he said with a scornful laugh, ‘However, you will be certain to forget the place,’ and with that—another insult, do you see?—he swaggered off.”

“Well, what address did he give you, and what time did he say he would be there?” demanded Clarise, sharply.

“Oh, the address he gave me is a place where he goes every day to dine. But pardon me, my dear girl,” concluded Paul, drawing himself up stiffly, and assuming a tone which secretly amused Clarise; “I am not at liberty to disclose anything further. Besides, such affairs are not for women to meddle with.”

“Oh, very well,” assented Clarise, smiling to herself, and, as they were now leaning over the parapet of the bridge, she looked down into the moonlit waters and softly hummed a little madrigal.

The pearl-gray dress of the young girl shimmered in

the moon-rays like a robe of silver; and her rounded and graceful figure was strikingly nymph-like, her piquant face exceedingly pretty, as she leaned over the railing, with two little white fists propping her chin.

But, with a lover's inconsistency, and a man's vanity, Paul indignantly resented this apparent indifference.

"Mon Dieu!" exclaimed he, after impatiently observing her awhile, "have you nothing to say, then?"

Clarise turned away from the parapet, placed her hands in each other as one does who is about to consider something serious, and asked:

"What do you intend to do?"

"I shall call him out!" replied he, fiercely, as he twisted his moustache.

"That is to say that you intend to fight a duel?"

"Of course."

"And he will have the right to declare whether it shall be with swords or—or something else?"

"Certainly, but of course it will be with swords; it will not be with muskets, poor child," and Paul laughed at the drollness of the idea.

"No," returned Clarise, undisturbed, "but pistols are often used, now. Well, he is very near-sighted, and I think he would select swords. Does he fence well—has he fought before?"

"How should I know?" answered Paul, impatiently.

"And you—do you fence well?" persisted Clarise, growing every instant more matter-of-fact.

Paul moved a pace or two away, as if to consider this very practical and by no means unimportant question, before replying to it. Then he said, with some hesitation:

"Oh, I fence tolerably well, I suppose. I took lessons from Captain Dumesnil, who is a great swordsman;



and lately I have had some practice with a student who lives next door to my lodging-place."

Clarise shook her head.

"And when you meet this D'Artivan, what will you do?"

"Mon Dieu!" cried Paul, retreating upon his imagination at once, "I shall wound him in the face—twice."

"And why in the face?" asked Clarise, watching him narrowly.

"Oh, because he thinks himself so handsome, and—and I want to—to spoil his good looks, don't you see," concluded Paul, who, in fact, was still plagued with a little jealousy, when he thought of the Lothario's boast.

"But suppose he does not give you the opportunity to wound him in the face?" persisted Clarise.

"Oh, I shall certainly find an opening," replied Paul, unconscious of the fact that every word he uttered was adding but further proof of his disqualification for the role of hero.

After a little demure meditation, Clarise removed her hands from the position deliberative, and placed them in the position belligerent; that is, upon her hips, with her elbows, which were very white and softly dimpled, aggressively prominent. Then she attacked Monsieur with a question that was decidedly to the point.

"How many lessons did Captain Dumesnil give you?"

Paul looked embarrassed.

"Well, five, then."

Clarise regarded her inconsiderate lover with a look of motherly pity. Then she placed one little palm against her cheek and reflected for the space of a minute. Her temptingly rosy under-lip assumed a pouting expression, and she patted her little foot absently against the flagstones.

Evidently, she had found it necessary to take Paul in charge. He had not thought of anything except his resentment. But Paul, we have already said, was not as intelligent as his sweetheart. Besides, in such cases, it is the woman who thinks of everything.

"Paul," said Clarise at last, "I will come to your rooms to-morrow evening at precisely eight, and fence with you. We shall then see."

"What do you say?" shouted Paul, in astonishment. Then, approaching her slowly,

"Do you mean to say that you can fence?"

"Certainly," replied Clarise, crisply. "I learned it from a great master, while my mistress and I were in Palermo."

Paul was dumbfounded. As he offered his arm to the young girl, for it was time for them to go home, he muttered to himself:

"Only to think of it—a girl who can fence!"

But Paul was not yet done with surprises.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### PAUL'S JOKE.

At half-past seven on the following evening, Monsieur Paul Cambray entered his apartments with a debonaire step and a smile on his lips which gently elevated his silky moustache. But he also brought with him something else besides the smile—a box of bonbons and a pair of toy swords, made of tin, which he placed on his table. The smile was a compliment to his own fine sense of humor; and the tin swords—well, they were to assist him in perpetrating a little joke upon his sweetheart. Afterwards, he would offer her the bonbons as a sort of propitiation.

The fact is that Monsieur Paul had been thinking a good deal over Clarise's proposition to teach him how to fence, and he had convinced himself that his rebuke of the night before had provoked her to humble him a little in return. When she came to see him this evening, he said to himself, she would have forgotten all about the matter, and he would tease her by offering her the tin swords. Ah! He could already see the look of chagrin in her demure little face; and he laughed heartily in anticipation.

When Clarise entered the neat sitting-room, she carried in her hand a long pasteboard box, such as were used for those immense sunshades in vogue with the Parisian ladies. This she placed on the table, without observing the articles intended for her. Then she seated herself comfortably in a chair, folded her hands, and looked smilingly at Paul. But her smile was only a

salutation; it soon gave place to a look of unusual gravity. She appeared preoccupied.

"Well," observed Paul, who had been watching her with a facetious expression, "it seems we have been shopping to-day?"

Clarise nodded. Then she sighed restfully, and remarked:

"It was such a task."

"No doubt," returned he, glancing amusedly at the parasol box.

"Yes," continued Clarise, gravely. "I had a great deal of trouble about it. Those shopkeepers are so excitable now, and they ask so many questions. And oh, the eternal cant one has to endure from them. It is 'citizen' here, and 'citizeness' there. How I detest it all." And Clarise indulged in a little frown, that brought her finely-arched eyebrows close together.

"I agree with you," responded Paul, warmly. "Yes, dirt and ignorance, brutality and insolence, are making this Paris insufferable. Ah, this leper-smitten Paris!"

Paul had suddenly become gloomy. He rose from his chair, and stared uneasily out of the window.

"Everybody has changed," continued he; "even our friends. There goes Dudevant now, who took so much pains to accommodate us, you recollect; a nibbling critic whom I once rather liked. Do you know that he came back here, after playing the spy in England for six months, to join Couthon? Yes, that cripple Couthon has made him his secretary, and his real business is to write screeds against Danton, who is hated and envied by the Jacobin."

"Couthon is a devil," murmured Clarise.

"Of course," assented Paul. "According to Greek mythology, every devil that fell from Heaven became instantly lame."



"Oh, that reminds me," exclaimed Clarise, who cared very little about the classics; "who do you think visited my mistress to-day?"

"Oh, Dulagre, of course," suggested Paul, indifferently.

"Ugh! That fellow with eyes like a rat's? Not he. Although it is true that he follows her like a shadow. He does not get into the chateau often I assure you. I believe he is a spy of the Marquis."

"Very likely."

"Well—try again."

"The King, perhaps," said Paul, laughingly.

Clarise tossed her curly head indignantly.

"My mistress would not receive a visit from the King, sir," she retorted, sharply. Then, impressively:

"It was somebody who has more power than the King."

"What do you tell me?" cried Paul, staring hard. "Who can you mean?"

Clarise leaned forward, placed both hands on her knees, and replied:

"Mirabeau."

Paul was astonished.

"Oh, what a woman!" exclaimed he, pacing the room excitedly. "Wherever she appears she conquers. And still it is not strange," he continued, stopping in front of Clarise; "she is greater than any of them. Oh, she will never be a wife."

"Indeed," exclaimed Clarise, bridling at once; "and pray tell me why?"

"Because she will never wed any man who is not her equal, and she is not likely to find such an one. But, after all, it is strange that she has no ambition."

"On the contrary," returned Clarise, with much emphasis, "my mistress is all ambition. But she desires

love first. It is true, as you say, that she could only love one as great as herself, or greater. Well, her ambition is to find such an one, and to make him still greater."

Then there was a pause. Suddenly, Paul's thoughts reverted to the promised lesson.

He began to approach his purpose in a circle.

"Can Mademoiselle, with all her gifts, handle a sword?" asked he, with a smirk.

"Handle a sword?" repeated the girl, with animation. "Decidedly. She was the most finished pupil the old maestro at Palermo had."

"Indeed?" returned Paul, greatly amused; "then it was Mademoiselle herself who took lessons." And Paul's smile melted into a laugh, as he approached the table.

"Apropos, my dear," said he, putting one of the tin swords in her hand, "it is time is it not, for us to begin our exercise?"

Clarise took the toy, examined it, reflected for a moment, and said, quietly:

"I see."

"Well, come," laughed Paul, "shall we begin?"

"Directly," answered she, without taking any notice of his mirth. "But let us first come to an agreement."

"Oh," cried Paul, with increasing mirth; "you need not be afraid of them, I assure you they are perfectly harmless, and I will not hurt you."

"I believe you," replied Clarise, drily. "But, listen: Whoever loses in the contest shall wear one of these tin swords with its red-painted hilt, all day for three full days. It shall hang at his side by its little strap, in full view, and there shall be no staying indoors during the three days. Is it agreed?"

Paul clapped his hands, and laughed immoderately.

"Oh, my poor little Clarise!" cried he; "only fancy yourself marching in and out of my lady's chamber like one of those pigmy bodyguards of ancient Egypt!"

"Be still, will you," ordered Clarise, impatiently. "Are you afraid, then?"

"Afraid? Come, that is too good. Let us begin, my child."

"Well, do you agree?"

"Of course I agree. So much the worse for you, my poor child."

"Very well, then, it is time to commence."

With this, Clarise advanced, in her turn, to the table, and, opening the pasteboard box, produced before the astonished eyes of Monsieur Paul two excellent steel foils, with buttons at the points.

"Take one," she said, laconically; "they are precisely the same, I think."

Paul was no longer smiling; on the contrary, he looked very sheepish. However, he took his position, very stiffly indeed, foil in hand.

"Do not stand that way," corrected Clarise, paying no attention to his embarrassment. Then, taking him by the shoulders, she gave him a little twist, and then directed him how to point his feet. His ankles as well as his wrists seemed positively to have no joints.

"Gracious!" cried Clarise, as she next removed the foil from his hand; "do not hold it as you would a meat ax. There—so," and she closed his fingers over the hilt lightly, pressing his thumb down against the guard.

Having thus got him in order, and given him a very red face, Clarise took her own weapon in her small but strong little hand, and faced him, the length of the foil distant.

"You are too close!" complained Paul, who was

becoming nervous. Evidently, he had forgotten some of the Captain's instructions.

But Clarise gave no heed to his objections.

"Now, on guard!" she commanded, sharply, raising her own weapon.

The next instant they were at it. And it must be confessed that they presented a fine contrast. Clarise, all suppleness, coolness, alertness; Paul, all clumsiness, heat and nervousness. The bout did not last long. In exactly four motions Clarise had touched him over the heart; in four more she had sent his foil spinning across the room.

Paul looked at it ruefully, then at her, inclined to be angry. But Clarise stood surveying him with perfect gravity; there was no sign of triumph in her glance.

"Let us try it over," said Paul, testily, as he picked up his foil.

But Clarise shook her head.

"But you know it was an accident," he insisted.

This was excellent; and Clarise found it quite difficult to repress a smile.

"My dear," she said, "it is these little 'accidents' which always happen to the one who loses the fight. No, you will not do. I will give you a lesson for an hour every night for one week; then we shall see."

Clarise replaced the foils in the box, and was about to reseal herself, when she discovered the bonbons, one of those sweet necessities of a grisette's life. It was she who was smiling now, but not over her lover's discomfiture. And while the sugar plums were melting succulently behind her very firm and very white little teeth, she reminded him of the penalty he had brought upon himself, and consented to release him from it, provided he would inform her of the whole matter



concerning D'Artivan, "just to gratify her curiosity," she explained. Paul accepted her terms at once.

Clarise left him then, and in a rather crestfallen state. He was decidedly dubious now about the size of the scars he had intended to leave on the smooth cheeks of his boastful rival.

As for Clarise, she had formed a resolution of her own, which, however, she kept to herself. What that resolution was, and how she kept it, will in due time appear. Suffice it for the present, that she was preparing another and the greatest surprise of all, for Monsieur Paul, and for some other people also.

## CHAPTER IX.

### THE CAFÉ OF THE THREE VIRGINS.

The Café of the Three Virgins, some twenty paces from the more aristocratic Café Conti, was, during the period of which we write, principally the resort of students and journalists. All the small gossip of the day was circulated there with that freedom and vivacity which characterized the two classes referred to, and gave them prestige over every other as news-gatherers and newsmakers.

This Café had been recommended to Achille Dudevant, on the day of his arrival in Paris, by a young scribbler of his acquaintance named Gascoigne. The two, bent upon the same errand, met on the Pont Neuf near the Palais de Justice, and in a moment were in each other's arms.

"Ah, mechant!" exclaimed Gascoigne, shaking an enormous head of hair, which was as sanguinary of hue as the doctrines he was paid to support; "you have then returned to help us set the fashion, eh?"

"To what fashion do you refer, my friend?" inquired Dudevant, who was always willing to listen.

"The deuce. But then you have been out of Paris. Well, old France is learning from young America. In fact, the revolution over the water has turned the heads of half the people; and the doctrines of the American Paine, who claims that he was the chief instrument in bringing it about, are exciting our philosophers upon the subject of religion; but you are better informed than you pretend to be. I know that you are a friend of that

little green-livered lawyer, Robespierre, whose eternal smile gives me the chills. Well, this poor devil of a lawyer, who carries a green bag filled with political documents instead of briefs, has, doubtless, kept you well filled. But come and dine with me to-morrow. Here is the card. At four o'clock, mind you. And, by the way, you will meet Long Nose there. He dines with me every day. A clever fellow, but insane on one point—he would do anything for notoriety, no matter about the quality. You will come?"

"Yes, and with right good will. I know the place very well. Au revoir."

Then the two, rejuvenated, parted with a vigorous handshake.

On the following day Dudevant found the menu and the company at the café so acceptable, that he very readily agreed to meet the two inseparables every Saturday at four, that they might dine together and compare notes.

Now, the landlord was a man of ideas; and on the day after the three journalists had taken their first dinner together, he said to his wife:

"Listen to me. You know that Monsieur Gascoigne—him of the red hair?"

"Ach," answered the lady, who was German; "noisy fellow. And his friend, Long Nose—I know not any other name for him, and he likes that one—with his long moustaches that he gets in the soup and then wipes on the table-cloth? And the new one, that Dudevant, with his black eyes that eats me, when he looks at me with them—"

"Parbleau, cease!" shouted her impatient spouse; "you have tongue plenty for one thousand sandwiches."

"Huh. I believe I may speak myself already," retorted she, indignantly.

"Well, well, pardi, listen. They are to come to-morrow, that is Saturday, and at the same hour."

"Four o'clock, yes, and they staid until six, but they did not eat much," said Madame, in a calculating tone.

"But they had four bottles of Coste Rotie, at two livres ten sous the bottle."

"So."

"Good, that is better than meat. Well, listen. Do you know what that fellow, who is so proud of being called Long Nose, said to me, after the fourth bottle was dusted?"

"Ach, I stopped mine ears up, they speak all at the same time."

"Pouf! Well, this Long Nose said :

"'Lachat, come here, you lascivious monster, I want you.' And when I protest to him, he shouts :

"'What, were you deceiving us, then? Come, where are those three virgins? Aha, let us see those three virgins!'

"And then I, Pierre Lachat, who use my brains and make my tongue their servant, Madame Lachat, do you see, I said :

"'Messieurs, you shall see those three virgins every night but this one. To-night they are at church.'

"'Ah, ah,' said Long Nose, with a great laugh; 'then they are devout as well as innocent. Well, Lachat, we will come here next Saturday at the same hour; and mind that you do not let them go to church before Sunday.'

"'It shall be so, Messieurs,' I said; and they believed me. Very well, listen:

"'I shall get me three very ugly women, yes, I warrant you they shall be no children; and I shall discharge Alphonse, and Albert, and Francois, who are going into the National Guards. Yes, yes, those three gay boule-



vardiers, they do not spare young and pretty girls, and, besides, they are fond of a joke. So do you see, Lachat will be talked about, and it will bring custom. Ah, Lachat knows his business.'"

And so it transpired, that when the three bonvivants came to the café, on the Saturday mentioned, three hideously ugly and angular spinsters walked up to the table, each wearing a white muslin frock, a white apron and an austere frown, and mildly asked for the three orders. But the three "virgins" were greeted with a chorus of shouts.

"Ah, Lachat, you rascal, you have played us a fine trick!" vociferated Long Nose.

"Relics of the Middle Ages!" cried Dudevant, staring at the poor women with astonishment, which they returned with interest.

"Harpies!" screamed Long Nose, darting that immense organ forward, as he ogled them.

Then the three guests burst into uncontrollable laughter, in which they were joined, more discreetly, however, by Lachat, who was peeping through the key-hole on the other side of the kitchen door.

This was more than the unlucky waitresses could stand. For a moment they glared at their customers dumbly; and then, seized by the same impulse, tore off their aprons, flung them on the floor, and fled from the place, leaving Lachat and his wife in consternation, and their guests in convulsions.

Dudevant was the first to recover his balance; and, on looking idly around, he perceived Lachat dolorously shaking his head and lamenting the predicament which the too free use of his "brains" had placed him in. A sudden idea occurred to Dudevant himself, the consequences of which, to him at least, were eventually as

tragical as those of Lachat's recent "idea" were comical.

"Lachat," he called to the disconsolate host, who was now undergoing, as a matter of course, a scoring from his wife at his stupid "jest;" "Lachat, you played us a trick, it is true, but we are sorry for you. Now, I will tell you what to do. For the remainder of to-day, that is, until midnight, myself and my two friends here will put on the aprons and serve your customers, while you occupy yourself in procuring new waiters. And, mark you, Lachat, on this condition, you are to treat us exactly as you would real waiters, and you are to call us, if you have occasion to speak to us at all, by the names of your old waiters. Is it agreed?"

Lachat looked from one to the other of his eccentric guests, bewildered and silent.

"Yes, yes, by all means, we will have it so," cried they, pressing forward; "come, Lachat, you owe us something for our disappointment."

"Very well, then," assented the restaurateur, scratching his head, with a doubtful air.

"Enough," said Dudevant, removing his coat; "get us the jackets, the aprons, and some of your own tog-gery; show us a place to make our toilets in, and, meantime, get us some soup and a ragout, with a bottle of Frontinac, and send it into the chamber to us. We shall soon be at our posts, I promise you."

Half an hour afterwards, the three guests, now transformed into three solemn-faced waiters, stationed themselves behind as many separate tables.

Neither of the three was long without customers; and customers, too, who made themselves exceedingly interesting, especially to Dudevant. As for his idea, it was destined, droll as it then appeared to him, to be a

fatal one, as we shall hereafter see. For the present, however, it was to end merely in an adventure decidedly to his liking.

In the meantime, Lachat, having seen the improvised waiters in their respective places with evident satisfaction, placed his hat on his head with the air of a proprietor who employs none but the best in his establishment, and sallied into the street, observing, as he went out:

"I am going to Issy, where there are some honest fellows from Brittany, who love the King. I want no more National Guard chaps. I shall return to-morrow morning."

As for Madame, who was the purveyor of the restaurant, that worthy dame equipped herself with an enormous covered basket, and went off in search of the usual Saturday evening supplies, an errand from which she seldom returned before ten o'clock.

Left thus entirely to themselves, with no one nearer than the cook in the kitchen, the waiters had already begun to enjoy the situation immensely, when just as the little clock which stared out from the wall of the café had tinkled seven strokes, two young men, dressed in the extreme of the fashion, wearing their rapiers ostentatiously, and chattering like magpies, entered the saloon, and were politely seated by Gascoigne. whose table was nearest the door.

"What will you have, gentlemen?" asked he, with an air which gave no suspicion that he was a novice.

"Oh," answered one of the two, a dark-featured Gascon, whose manner was provokingly impertinent; "bring us some kind of fish, a fowl each, truffles, the 'etceteras,' and three bottles of Hermitage. And, look you, fellow, do not shake the bottles."

This "Hermitage" was a favorite wine with de-

bauchees, since, although much stronger than the other table wines then in use, it left no very disagreeable effects from its too free indulgence.

While Gascoigne was absent in the kitchen delivering this order, a tall and sedate gentleman, somberly dressed, came in quietly, and seated himself at the table presided over by Long Nose. This personage attracted no attention from the two gossipers, as, in a deep and curiously measured voice, he gave his order for a moderate dinner without wine. Nor did he give more than a passing glance at them; immediately relapsing into himself, and thereafter paying no attention, apparently, to the clatter of tongues at the next table.

The loquacity of the two convives was, in fact, extraordinary, and to Dudevant, who was observing the new arrival, his indifference appeared suspiciously affected.

The conversation of the two fashionables was led by the Gascon, who addressed his friend as Eugene, and was in turn addressed as "Victor." The latter was probably twenty-five years of age, yet his shrewd and cynical face, and confident and ready speech, interlarded though it was with frequent insipid phrases, belonged naturally to a much older man.

"Do you know," observed he, as he held the ends of a long and black "imperial" between his thumbs and forefingers, "we had no right to expect any better things from the King? When his grandfather died he declared that he did not know how to reign. Ah, if Louis XV. had only given up the ghost twenty years sooner, what a fortunate death it would have been for France, and especially for Louis XVI! It was a relief, when he did go, to everybody except the parasites."

"Well, there was no weeping, pardieu! among the people—that is certainly true. And what a devil of a hurry they were in to get him under ground! And no



wonder; he is said to have laughed just before he died, and said: 'After all, I do not complain; there is no more juice in the orange; France is bankrupt.' This he actually said to his mistress, who did not wait for the carriage to take him to St. Denis, before she began to pack her wardrobe."

"Poor France!" observed the Gascon; "always in the toils of a woman! There is Jeannie Poisson, who never in her life could rid herself of a fishy name or a fishy smell, much as she insisted on being called Madame La Pompadour. When she found that Louis was never able to understand a mot until she explained it to him, she became ennuied, and, being ambitious, turned her talents to greater account by ruling the kingdom as well as the King."

"It is very strange," mused the other; "even our men of brains are mere toys in the hands of these intrigantes. For instance, Danton, that new captain of the Jacobins. Danton can thunder in the tribune like another Jove, but he can also 'mew' in the boudoir like a grimalkin. They say he has five mistresses now and that they are all savagely jealous of each other."

"Heavens! No wonder he raves, then, when he gets in the Convention. His enemies there are not half so terrible as the petticoats."

"But now, they say, he is chasing a star; that is, he is after Venus."

"Peste, my friend," sneered the other, "you are not in good taste; you are mysterious."

"Oh, well, then," returned his companion, coloring with a touch of resentment, "to be plainer, if you wish it, he is in love with Mlle. Sainte Maur."

"Sacre! with that incomprehensible? She who is in league with Lucifer? That icicle?"

"Tut, tut," retorted the purveyor of this surprising

news; "rumor is always wrong, especially if it comes from the gazettes. I know some of these fellows who write; they are magnificent liars, that is all."

This unconscious shot at Dudevant struck him between the teeth. He raised the napkin he carried on his arm, to hide the anger that shone in his face, but of course he could say nothing. "Devil take the fellow," he contented himself with saying, under his breath; "I will pay him for that sometime."

"You see," continued the speaker, "it is all owing to the lessons she took from this great scientist Mesmer, that she is able to play such havoc. Still, she has the semblance of an angel, and may have been one. At any rate, everybody has remarked the likeness she bears to the great huntress of the Greeks, and you know Diana herself was changed into Hecate. However, Danton should keep his head, even though he can not retain his heart. He will soon need the first with Robespierre, who is anxious to try Doctor Guillotin's machine on it."

"But, after all, Robespierre declares that he adores blood and brains, and Danton has plenty of both."

"Oh, Robespierre likes blood and brains, yes. Pooh! so does the pole-cat. When it finds a poultry yard, it feasts on nothing but the blood and brains of the fowl. Yes, to be sure, Robespierre is the pole-cat, and Paris is his poultry yard."

Another stab at Dudevant, whose face was now purple behind his napkin.

"Ah, well," reflected Eugene, "Danton has his friends. There is his Achates, Camille Desmoulins, who has written such stirring incendiaryisms over the name, 'Attorney-General of the Lantern.'"

"And who will help behead his friend by his imprudences. He has already given the Convention the idea of using the street lantern posts for gallows. After

awhile the idea will recoil upon this poetaster Desmoulins."

At this moment, there entered the café an exceedingly handsome but effeminate appearing youth, of perhaps twenty, attired in the dress of a cavalier, and wearing a fine rapier. He was rather short of stature, but he was perfectly formed, though a trifle too sloping on the shoulders. His short upper lip was graced by a black moustache; black and short locks of curling hair clustered around the cream and rose-tinted face; while from under his gray beaver (which he did not remove) two bright black eyes glanced boldly around the room. Evidently, this handsome youth possessed an independent spirit, and one not easily subdued.

Seating himself at the table attended by Dudevant, he gave an order for several dishes, in a musical and clear voice, and began humming a popular air.

Dudevant's manner, as he took the order, was, to say the least, surprising. He started, stared at his customer, colored redly; and, coughing violently, as if to conceal his embarrassment, went off toward the kitchen with the gait of one who has had a sudden and unexpected shock. He was gone a long time; and in the interval of waiting, the youth continued to hum his lively air, oblivious, it was seen, to everything in the place except his elegant and very small boot, with which he amused himself by tapping with his rapier's sheath. He was not permitted to monopolize himself very long, however; he had attracted the attention of the two at Gascoigne's table. They proceeded at once to guy him; and the very pointed remarks which came from that quarter were quite loud enough for him to hear—as they intended he should.

"Soh!" cried Monsieur Victor, ogling him impudently; "here is a fledgeling that has not moulted. He

seems to invite some one to pluck his feathers, eh, Eugene?"

At this deliberate attack the youth fixed his dark eyes upon the speaker with a resentful expression in them; but he said nothing and ceased to hum to himself.

"A pretty nestling!" continued the Gascon, who by this time had disposed of his bottle of "Hermitage" and was decidedly ripe for mischief. "Yes," he repeated, rising from his seat and approaching the young stranger, who began softly stroking his delicate moustache with a hand as fair as a woman's, and certainly as small, while his eyes were now fixed upon the floor.

"Can you use that plaything?" inquired the obtruder, mockingly, as he laid his hand on the youth's sword hilt.

"Yes!" retorted the latter, suddenly bounding out of his chair; and in an instant the weapon was out of its scabbard. "And with this 'plaything' I am going to teach you to dance, ruffian!"

Then, as the astounded bravo recoiled, the cavalier advanced upon him, exclaiming:

"Draw, fellow, draw!"



## CHAPTER X.

### DUDEVANT AND HIS FRIENDS.

The amazement of the Gascon at the peremptory invitation of the youthful stranger was as profound as it was ludicrous. His arms fell drooping at his sides, his rather large mouth opened with a gasp, and he stared at the "ruffled gallant" without uttering a word.

The astonishment of Monsieur Eugene was almost as great as his friend's, but not so prolonged.

"Peste!" cried he, coming forward and surveying the challenger with a stare no longer impertinent, but displaying intense curiosity; "who have we here in this boudoir knight?"

"It matters not who I am," retorted the young stranger, impatiently. "This bragging fellow has insulted me, and if he is not a coward, he will give me satisfaction. Come, now," he continued, contemptuously; "is he afraid?"

"Certainly not," promptly replied Eugene. "My friend will fight you, of course; but this is no place for such an encounter. We can arrange—"

But the youth impetuously interrupted him.

"He must fight now," cried he, stamping upon the floor, angrily.

The three *soi-disant* waiters had gathered around the group, scarcely less interested in the affray than they.

Dudevant nudged Gascoigne.

"Ma foi," whispered he, with a covert laugh; "here is the best of luck for us! Our adventure was well

planned; it is going to amount to something. I say, Gascoigne, let us help this brave youngster against that bully who has insulted our profession so grossly."

"Certainly," Gascoigne whispered back; "besides, the poor boy will need it."

"Pshaw, you are wrong, if you think him a baby. I know him."

"What, you know him?" ejaculated Gascoigne, surprised and more curious than ever; "Well, then, who the devil is he?"

"It is Monsieur Aubrey," replied Dudevant, in a very loud whisper. Then, turning toward the belligerent pair, who were frowning at each other in precisely the same way that two old women would have done."

"Gentlemen," said he, with great politeness, "behind the Café there is a little garden with a very high wall. It is a very private and convenient place, and no one will disturb you there, I can well assure you of that. If it is agreeable to you, I will show you the way to it."

"Do so, then," commanded young Aubrey. "I presume Monsieur will not object?" addressing the Gascon, who by this time had become entirely sober, and was taking the matter very seriously indeed, considering the jocular way in which he had brought it about.

"Oh, I am at your service," replied he, with affected indifference.

"Let us go, then," said Aubrey, briefly; and the whole party started at once toward the rear of the saloon. Dudevant walked in front, at the side of the youth, to whom, as he opened the door to the garden, he whispered:

"Do not start or exclaim—I know you."

"And I know you," replied the other, quietly, and without evincing the least surprise. "You wonder what all this means, do you not?"

"By Jupiter! I am nonplussed!"

"And I no less so, to see you in a waiter's apron, in a second-rate cafe," returned the youth, with a satirical smile which showed marvelously fine teeth. "However, this is an age of adventure, is it not? So, let us wait until there is no cockatrice at our heels to charm our tongues before we exchange confidences. But—stay. Go you back to the table where the middle-aged gentleman sits alone and bring him into the garden. He is a surgeon, and is, like very few of our sex, a discreet man."

"Ah, you know him, then?"

"Yes."

"Very good. I am at your disposal, even if you should desire me to take this little affair off your hands."

The youth's eyes flashed scornfully.

"Do you think I am not in earnest with this contemptible fellow? Well, you will see. I intend to chastise him by leaving my card, as they say, buttoned to his cheek. Go, and bring the surgeon back with you."

"But suppose he will not come?"

"Pshaw, it is I who asked him to come here. It is not desirable, however, that these fellows should be informed of that; so, Doctor Souchon will not stir until some one summons him."

"A thousand wonders! muttered Dudevant, as he hastened to obey; "what is going to come of this?"

A second later, and just as the parties were taking their places, Dudevant reappeared with the surgeon, who quietly walked to a corner of the garden, and turned his back to the party.

Aubrey led off without wasting any time. He was fully three inches shorter than his adversary, but as agile as a cat. The Gascon was soon convinced that the "ruffled youth" was at least no novice in the handling of

a rapier; and, while he himself was no bungler, it was quite evident, to the chagrin of his friends as well as himself, that he stood but a poor chance of worsting his young opponent. The latter darted in and out from him with a swiftness and dexterity that was bewildering; at the same time keeping his own person skilfully covered, while he occasionally cried out, in a tone of sarcasm that was maddening to his victim:

"Dance, dance, I tell you!"

And dance the Gascon did, in spite of himself; that is to say, he was compelled to skip hither and thither in the most ludicrous fashion, simply to avoid the point of the other's steel, which every instant threatened to probe him. In fact, this will-o-the-wisp seemed quite capable of making him dance, and also of skewering him, whenever he choose to do so.

At length the youth made a very clever body feint which completely deceived the Gascon, and left the face of the latter fairly exposed. Before he could recover his guard, he received a blow on the left cheek, which laid it open to the bone, and sent him reeling back into the arms of his friend.

"Oh, Mon Dieu!" he cried, in the accents of a dying person; "he has killed me! Ah-h, my friend, I am a dying man—a dead man! Help—ugh-h."

And with his eyes turned upward, his face streaming with blood, he appeared, indeed, to be telling the truth. The surgeon hastened to him, drew from his pocket some lint and a box of ointment, and, calling for a sponge and a basin of water, was instantly absorbed in manipulating the wound.

But, if the Gascon's conduct verged upon the ridiculous (for he was by no means seriously wounded, nor even disabled), that of his enemy was incomprehensible. At least it was so to all except Dudevant, who apparently



saw nothing surprising in it. The delicate face of the youth became colorless, the plump figure trembled, and he gasped, faintly:

“Take me into the café and call a carriage.”

Dudevant promptly offered his arm, and Aubrey, leaning on it in great agitation, returned to the saloon and tottered to a chair.

Having assisted him into the seat Dudevant called out:

“Long Nose, bring me a glass of wine, and do not be an instant about it.”

Long Nose did as he was bidden, and, as he handed the wine to Dudevant, he whispered:

“Sapristi, you forget that I am Alphonso. And—your friend, too; it seems he also has lost his head.”

“Never mind,” returned Dudevant, waving his hand impatiently. “Now, then, run and fetch a fiacre, and be careful that you do not fall over your nose. You will find one at the Pont Neuf.”

This order Long Nose also hastened to obey, and without stopping for his hat or removing his apron. In a few minutes he returned, with an English-looking person at his heels.

Dudevant, who was vigorously fanning his friend, scarcely glanced at the man, as he said, sharply:

“Here, my man, get on your wheels at once, and take this gentleman to the address he will presently give you.”

But, instead of instantly obeying these summary orders, the man stared at the young cavalier with a look of intense astonishment. Then, over his rosy and good-looking countenance there rapidly spread a smile that was indescribable. He was about to speak, when Aubrey raised his eyes and saw him standing motionless before him. The color came suddenly back into his cheeks, he

gave the man a swift sign to be silent, and, springing from his chair, walked briskly toward the door, saying in an undertone :

“Come on, Mr. Guppy, and take me home, if you please.”

“With all me’eart,” responded that genial individual, for it was indeed he; and without any further hesitation, and with the gravity of a bishop, he assisted Monsieur Aubrey into the fiacre which stood at the door. In another second he was whirling rapidly away from the Café of the Three Virgins, in the doorway of which three masculine and eager faces, with the nose of Long Nose in the center, remained as long as the fiacre was in sight.

The opportune appearance of Mr. Guppy, although a surprise, is easily explained. His indulgent master allowed him certain half-holidays, and, this being one, he had gone to the kitchen of the Café Conti to meet an old acquaintance from London, who had adopted the whip for his profession on migrating to Paris. His stand was close to the Pont Neuf, and there his friend found him. The wine at the Café Conti had proved, in the vernacular of Mr. Guppy, “too willainous ’eady,” and he was constrained to assist the “whip” to a bed.

With a thoughtful regard for his friend’s interest, Guppy had taken temporary charge of the fiacre; and, being a person of keen eyesight as well as of prompt action, he was the first to espy Long Nose flying toward the bridge, bareheaded and wearing the apron of a waiter. He had very adroitly allowed Long Nose to rush squarely into his arms, and, of course, secured him.

There was an ecstatic twinkle in Mr. Guppy’s eyes as he drove on with the dexterity of a practiced cabby; and he addressed himself with a sententious force which greatly relieved his feelings:

“Well, ’ere’s a lark! I’m floored!”

## CHAPTER XI.

### FERDEAN, THE MONEY-CHANGER.

When the precise extent of Monsieur Victor's wound was ascertained by the surgeon, he was turned over to his friend by the professional gentleman, with a dry suggestion that in future he should know his man better before attempting to pull his ears. Monsieur Eugene's concern thereupon speedily changed to contempt. He requested Dudevant to send for a fiacre, but the latter explained that he and his two friends were alone in the restaurant, that they were only volunteer waiters, and he must go for a conveyance himself. "Although," he observed, maliciously, in the hearing of the collapsed flamboyant, "your friend is more damaged in his nerves than in his person."

Monsieur Victor, who had proved so unworthy of his name, scowled angrily at this offensive speech, and, shaking his hand at Dudevant threateningly, said:

"Oh, you shall pay for this, I tell you. I know you now, and I believe you are at the bottom of this business. Scelerat!" And, without waiting for a reply, he took the arm of his friend, and left the café. A fiacre was found in the vicinity, into which Eugene placed him, and, coldly bidding him good-night, quietly slipped away, and left him to his own reflections.

Thus abandoned, the Gascon rode off to his lodgings in a tumult of passion. After several alternate spasms of rage and muttered promises of revenge, he reached his rooms. By this time he had partially consoled him-

self for his defeat at the hands of a "boy," and was so preoccupied in brooding over Dudevant's supposed participation in the affair, that he had almost forgotten the pain from which he was still suffering. He had not exactly formulated a plan; but he had resolved to locate his youthful conqueror and watch for a favorable—that is to say, a safe—opportunity to pay him off with double measure. He was quite capable of taking revenge in any form in which it might present itself; he would not be at all particular as to the means he should be obliged to employ.

But when he entered his rooms he ran to his glass; and as he looked at his reflected and now ugly and sinister image, he uttered a howl of rage. A hideous scar extended half-way across his cheek, and he realized, the moment he saw it, that it was likely to leave there a broad and deep cicatrice which would disfigure him for the rest of his life. As he glared at the caricature of himself, his fury became uncontrollable, and he gave himself up to it with an abandon that was frightful to witness. For an hour or more he continued to invoke unspeakable, calamitous, and unheard-of curses upon Dudevant and the young stranger who had so sadly and fairly worsted him; and then, exhausted at last, he threw himself down upon a settee, and sunk into a sullen stupor.

The whole nature of this man was evil; and Dudevant, as well as the young duelist, had aroused in him—not the lion, but the cobra, whose slimy and sinuous folds they were yet to feel coiling about their unguarded throats. It is doubtful, indeed, if he had ever in his life experienced an emotion that was not ignoble or vicious. Vindictive, malicious and treacherous, he possessed the confidence of no one, and the good will of few. He had come to Paris some five months previous to



his unlucky adventure, to enjoy himself, he said; and he claimed to own an estate in Gascony, somewhere near Bayonne, which yielded him a competent income, although it appears that his improvident habits brought him to the end of his monthly receipts in about half that length of time. He had made the acquaintance of Paul Cambray soon after his arrival, and had sought his company constantly, and had secured at least the good will of the young man, until he was, unluckily, introduced to Clarise at the theatre, where she had participated in a charade that required her to wear a half-mask and domino. He had only obtained a partial view of her face on that occasion; and, as Clarise had truthfully said, he had seen her subsequently at a distance through a closed window of the chateau, to which he had followed her on the night referred to, hoping to find future opportunities of attracting her toward himself.

On the morning of the Saturday following his encounter at the café, he went out for the first time for a promenade. He was feeling languid and disconsolate, and in a mood to welcome the companionship of any acquaintance he might chance to meet. He had passed several whom he knew, but they hurried past him with averted faces, or with a sidelong smirk.

"Thousand devils!" he muttered, between his set teeth; "that sneaking Dudevant has informed everybody."

He turned off the boulevard, and with a vague impulse sought Paul Cambray's quarters. Paul was at home, the bank's closing hour on Saturday being twelve o'clock. He received his visitor with surprise, which was greatly increased when he saw the red scar upon his cheek.

"Oh, it is you, Monsieur Victor D'Artivan," he

exclaimed, coldly, and with a great deal of embarrassment.

"Yes, of course it is I, my friend," replied the Gascon, whose assurance, at least, never deserted him. "I have come to ask you to overlook my conduct when I met you some time ago. The fact is, I was fuddled."

Then D'Artivan held out his hand.

Paul's embarrassment gave way to renewed surprise and, it shall be said in his favor, genuine pleasure, at this apparently manly acknowledgment of his offense by the man whose two cheeks he had lately been so eager to disfigure.

But, how was this? Here was his late enemy with one of his cheeks in that very condition, and, yes, plainly from the stroke of a weapon! What could it mean? He stared at D'Artivan's face, while he cordially shook him by the hand, and, leading him to a chair, asked, hesitatingly:

"Pardon me; you have met with an accident?"

D'Artivan glanced at him furtively. "Oh, then, you do not know about it?"

"About what?" inquired Paul, with a candid look of curiosity that convinced the other of his sincerity.

"Oh, I had an affair a few days ago," he explained, greatly pleased that here, at least, he was beforehand with the gossipers. "Yes, and, unfortunately, as I was about to settle my man with a cut on his sword-arm that would have excused him from ever accepting another challenge, my foot slipped on a cursed piece of orange peel which I had just thrown away (you are aware of my careless habits), and I fell forward while lunging and received my enemy's point in my cheek."

Paul had listened to this, to him, very plausible explanation with open-eyed credulity.

"How unfortunate!" he exclaimed, with frank sympathy. "It may remain there for life."

"Enfer! yes, that is the worst of it," responded D'Artivan, suddenly growing black at the thought.

"And who was your antagonist?" inquired Paul.

"Oh, a fellow who called himself Aubrey. He acted very offensively toward me at a café—you know the place where I used to dine—and I called him out. Of course, there were some other persons present, and they have taken the trouble to give a malicious and ridiculous version of the accident; but they are enemies of mine, and I shall take no notice of their stories. As for you, I am sure you will place no faith in them, and that we are excellent friends as before."

"To be sure," returned Paul, who was not the one to harbor a grudge under such circumstances.

Having thus restored himself with Paul Cambray, D'Artivan, whom the story of the duel had almost entirely ostracised, began to frequent the rooms of the latter constantly, and to receive Paul in his own once or twice a week. They went out a great deal together, notwithstanding that Clarise did not at all appear to like their now fraternal relation, and had almost quarreled with her lover on account of it. D'Artivan had, however, completely won his sympathy by telling him enough of the real facts concerning the unfortunate duel to convince the susceptible youth that his friend was the victim of persecution and misrepresentation. The intimacy therefore, increased instead of cooled, in spite of the strange remarks which Paul sometimes heard of the affair at the café, until the two young men were inseparable.

D'Artivan, at this time, was in the habit of visiting a certain money-lender by the name of Ferdean, who lived in an obscure street near the barrier of the Gobe-

lins, entirely alone. Little was seen or known of this man in the neighborhood. He was supposed to be an Arab; at all events, his extremely dark and oriental features gave warrant to this supposition, and his age was about that of D'Artivan, whom, in fact, he greatly resembled, both in figure and features. Had Ferdean been less dark the two men would have been singularly alike in physical appearance.

One evening D'Artivan climbed the dingy stairs of the ancient building, in the fourth story of which Ferdean lived, and, rapping sharply at the rickety door, was bidden by a voice of exceeding harshness to come in.

D'Artivan unceremoniously did so, pushing the door open violently with his foot. The room was large and dingy, and contained but few articles of poor furniture, which appeared to have served several generations. In fact, the only articles of the kind in the squalid chamber were a miserable cot, covered with faded and ragged bedclothes, a small table, which leaned against the blackened wall on its three legs, a black iron lamp, already lighted, which stood on the ancient wooden mantel, and, lastly, an old leathern-covered chair in the middle of the room, on the present occasion containing the dilapidated figure of Ferdean.

Ferdean was nodding over a pipe, with a stem several feet in length, which allowed the bowl to rest on the toe of his greasy slipper.

"At it again, eh?" exclaimed his visitor, sniffing the air, which had a peculiarly pungent odor.

Ferdean raised his eyes, which were dull and vacant, turned his swarthy face toward the door, and replied, testily:

"What would you have? You are sound in body and nerves, and know nothing of my torments. I smoke



to ease them." Then, without taking any further notice of his caller, he lapsed into that profound and dreamy stupor which the veteran opium-smoker invites with such terrible persistency until it ends in perpetual chaos.

D'Artivan regarded the crouched figure scornfully for a few seconds, and then, stooping over it, shouted in its ear.

"I say, Ferdean, are you there?"

The dreamer stirred a little, and muttered, almost inaudibly:

"Besides, it is the breath of the Gods."

"Breath of Lucifer," returned D'Artivan, with an impatient sneer. "It will carry your own breath off some of these times."

Ferdean offered no contradiction to this prophecy.

"Come, come," cried D'Artivan, after waiting a moment or two longer; "rouse yourself, you old Shylock, and attend to business, will you?"

No answer and no movement.

"Million devils!" shouted the Gascon; "he's in the tomb."

And, without the least ceremony, he plucked the pipe out of Ferdean's hand and tossed it into the farthest corner of the room.

Ferdean's half-closed eyes flew open instantly, and out of their black depths two fiery gleams shot like meteors. With incredible quickness he leaped from his chair, and, with a howl of rage which sounded scarcely human, he drew a short dagger from the folds of his greasy garment and darted at the amazed and, in fact, terrified culprit.

The ugly weapon would certainly have parted D'Artivan's ribs had he not been rendered unusually nimble by fright, which also added to his strength; since,

in leaping aside to avoid the blow aimed at his body, he landed against the opposite wall. Seizing the table, near which he had fortunately landed, he thrust it in front of the enraged Ferdean, who had that moment again darted toward him with the upraised knife.

Ferdean struck the table and overturned it, and before he could leap over it D'Artivan had sprung to the side of the cot and dragged from it the outer coverlet. An idea, the inspiration of fear, had darted into his mind.

As Ferdean rushed once more upon him, blinded by rage, and holding the murderous dagger with the point toward his own breast, ready for a down stroke, D'Artivan skilfully threw the quilt full at his pursuer's front, enveloping him completely in its ragged folds. Ferdean's foot caught in one of its many holes; he stumbled and fell, uttered a single fierce shriek and laid perfectly still.

If the terror of D'Artivan was a moment before extreme, his horror now was indescribable. It froze his blood and held him rigid and dumb where he stood. His staring eyes glued themselves to the fearful object lying at his feet under its ragged pall; and, while he looked, a stream of blood began slowly to creep out from under the quilt, widening upon the bare floor as it came toward him.

How long he remained in that frozen attitude he knew not; but at length his senses began to return. He moved away from the red current that now had almost reached his feet; closed the half-open door with an unconscious hand; and then, trembling and white, chilled and stupefied, he sank down into the dead man's chair.

## CHAPTER XII.

### A PERLOUS SITUATION.

When D'Artivan entered Ferdean's room it was only a little after sunset. When he dropped, trembling into the dead man's chair it was almost dark. Nothing in the dismal place was now visible except the ghostly outlines revealed by the feeble and funereal light of the iron lamp on the mantel shelf.

As soon as he could summon courage to move, he rose and walked on tip-toe, as if the noise of his footsteps might, perchance, awake the ghastly sleeper yonder, and took the lamp in his shaking hand, stopping a moment to listen to the solitary footfalls of a passing wayfarer in the street outside. Then, holding the light above his head, he slowly crept toward the stark figure on the floor, and stood looking, in quaking dread, upon its muffled shape. The blood had ceased to flow from underneath the pall, and now remained in a clotted pool at one side of the body.

For several minutes D'Artivan lingered at his fearful inspection, as if fascinated by the weird spectacle. At length he stooped down, uncovered the body, and turned it over upon its back. As he did so he uttered a cry of horror and staggered backward. Ferdean's face was completely dyed with his own blood; the stiffened arms and hands were blood-soaked; a red clot had matted the long hair above the low forehead, giving it an aspect hideous beyond description. The ivory handle of the dagger protruded from the bloody breast,

and the fierce eyes were open, and stared in a horrible manner at the living likeness that cowered there in the corner of the miserable den.

Overcome, for the second time, by this ghastly sight, D'Artivan once more sank into the chair from which the Arab had so short a while ago leaped to his death. He shrank within himself as he touched the warm leather, redolent as it was from the fumes of the dead man's pipe; but there was no other seat in the chamber, and his limbs refused to uphold him.

Now he endeavored to reflect. He had realized, from the moment Ferdean's awful scream smote upon his heart—as well as upon his ear—that his own situation was a terrible one. He had entered while it was yet daylight, and he dare not leave until he had considered well. Otherwise, he would have fled at the instant he heard that death-shriek. But something must be done. At any moment some one might enter and find him there. And if he was thus discovered while that horrid object lay yonder with its bloody mask upturned, the dagger still sheathed in its cloven heart, its staring eyes following him like accusers—what account could he give of the awful tragedy that would for one instant be believed? None; a gens d'armes' escort, a dungeon, the pretense of a trial and—the iron hook of a street lantern post. That would be his fate if he was caught by the concierge, or by any red-capped canaille, attired in his velvet breeches, his fine long-coat and silken hose. The name "aristocrat" was no longer flung as an epithet at the gentry or nobility alone. It was hurled at the ruffled vulgarian as often as at the silken courtier; and when and where it struck death followed.

D'Artivan's reflections decided him. He went to the door and locked it. His composure had gradually returned while he was evolving his idea of escape.



"Undoubtedly," soliloquized he, aloud, in his earnestness, "I was seen by some person to enter, as I came here before it was dusk. Very well, then, I must not be seen going out. Ah, I have it! I will exchange my dress for that of Ferdean, who is the same size as myself, and resembled me so strangely. He will not need his clothes any longer; and besides, pardieu, my own will give him a decent burial suit. Then, I will pull the bed over him; that will conceal everything. Good, I am coming around to myself again."

These shrewd reflections, thus repeated to himself aloud, had an exhilarating effect; they seemed to inspire him with more courage and more confidence in his resources. He looked boldly, and without shaking his chin—as he had been doing a little while before at the corpse on the floor—and continued to rehearse the revolting part he was about to enact:

"What next? Yes, I will then open the door, and I will seat myself with my back to it, with Ferdean's pipe in my mouth, though I shall not dare to smoke that infernal stuff with the heathenish name. Faugh! it made a fool of Ferdean, it would make a caged rat of me. Very well, the concierge will come prowling about when it has grown late, and he will see a light still burning in here and Ferdean—that is myself—sitting here and appearing to smoke, and he will say to himself: 'It is all right; this Ferdean is a devil of a smoker!' and off he will go to his bed. Good."

D'Artivan spread his legs apart and placed his hands in the pockets of his coat. These pockets were behind, and were placed close together, so that the position he took threw his chest out bravely.

"So," he went on, in easy conversation with himself, with one eye closed while the other rested unblinkingly upon the blood-red face at the other end of the room;

"after awhile I will go out, lock the door and put the key in my pocket—that is, in Ferdean's pocket, where it belongs, of course, leaving the lamp burning to keep him company. Excellent; I have forgotten nothing, Ferdean, my friend! Then, any one whom I may meet on the stairs, or in this devilishly forlorn street, will mistake me for Ferdean. As for the blood, it will not be observed in the dark, especially as Ferdean's clothes are brown; and, besides, I will be in the shadows nearly the whole way to my lodgings. Come, this is excellent!"

By the time that D'Artivan had arrived at the end of his soliloquy his spirits had risen considerably, and without losing any more time he set to work to carry out his ghoulish purpose.

In spite of his bravado, however, he was fearfully pale while engaged in stripping the body of Ferdean; and in withdrawing the dagger from the body, which was rendered necessary in order to remove the coat, he was subjected to the most frightful of all ordeals. As he drew the knife out of the wound a fresh stream of blood spouted forth, warm and red, and saturated his hands as completely as though they had been dipped in a basin of it.

It was several minutes before D'Artivan recovered from this shock, the worst, indeed, that he had yet experienced; and his hands, from which he shudderingly wiped the crimson fluid, shook as if palsied when he resumed his lugubrious task.

At last, with great difficulty, Ferdean was invested with D'Artivan's clothing to the last article. Several letters from certain nympts, addressed to him as "Monsiur Jean Jourgot," were left in the pockets to mislead the police. Everything else he transferred to the gaping and greasy pockets of the brown "raglan"

which he had stripped from the body. Then he proceeded to clothe himself in the garments of the dead man, which fitted his person exactly, and elicited from him a feeble joke or two about the advantage that might have accrued had they been co-partners. But there was one thing, of the utmost importance, too, which he had almost forgotten; the fresh color of his skin, and that cursed scar, which the pallor of his face just now made more glaringly vivid than ever, must be changed to a tan. Fortunately, he remembered this; but he had no pigment at hand.

Removing a small pocket-glass from a pouch in Ferdean's waistcoat, he stared into it for some moments, perplexed and anxious.

"Well, come," he mumbled to himself; "how can I stain my face and hands so as to make them resemble the money changer's? Peste, his skin was like a mummy's in color, all copper and black variegation. What the devil shall I do with mine?"

The dilemma was a serious one; but, as if the demon whose aid he had just invoked had come to his assistance on the instant, he started suddenly, made a violent gesture of dissent and turned still whiter as he exclaimed, hoarsely:

"My God! it is too horrible."

But, recovering himself after an effort:

"Yes," he muttered, desperately, "it must be done. Mon Dieu! yes. And, after all, he is dead; and, as for myself, morbleu, I shall be soon like him if I hesitate or stay in this den much longer.

Then, what this man did was this: He took from the pocket of his coat a small knife, with which he cut off a thin piece of wood from the side of the bedstead. Lighting this by the flame of the lamp, he allowed it to burn until it was charred at the end. Then, dipping

this charred end in the clotted blood on the floor, he deliberately smeared the horrible compound over his face; after which he carefully and lightly wiped off the surface with his handkerchief. After two or three times resorting to his pocket-mirror, he became satisfied that he had imitated Ferdean's mahogany complexion surprisingly well; thereupon, he began to treat his hands and wrists, his ears, throat and neck to the same sickening process. This finished, he once more surveyed himself, and exclaimed, with horrid complacency:

"Saints and devils! If I saw myself in the pool of Narcissus, I should believe it was Ferdean himself."

This astonishing transformation now being complete, D'Artivan next lifted the cot, and pushed it forward until it rested directly over the corpse of Ferdean, hiding also the pool of blood on the floor. As he turned away, he saw a small ebony box, like an antique coffer, and bound with brass, laying on the spot from which he had just removed the bed. D'Artivan recognized this box instantly; and with a cry expressive of greed and exultation, he sprang toward it, seized it in his hands, and carried it to the lamp for closer inspection. Plunging his hand into one of Ferdean's pockets, with nervous haste he drew therefrom a bunch of keys, with one of which he unlocked the casket.

D'Artivan had seen this box several times before. He had borrowed money from Ferdean a number of times, and the money had always come from this repository. And now it was his. No more drawing of notes, no more security on his patrimony, no more usury. He was about to get back all the interest he had paid the Arab, and all the Arab's capital with it. It was excellent, it was superb! Perhaps he should find sundry notes and mortgages he had given the money-changer, in this wonderful casket, under the carved lid which he was going



to open immediately. He held it before him, balancing it in his eager fingers, and murmured :

“Pardieu, it is delightfully heavy !”

In waiting now to examine its contents, part at least of which he already knew or guessed at, the Gascon committed a serious imprudence ; and he was indulging his curiosity at a price he little suspected. Of course he was aware that he was in imminent danger of being discovered, as he had already reminded himself a dozen times within the hour ; but his cupidity was almost as great as his fear ; and he could not resist the temptation to peep at the treasures he had stolen without compunction from the dead.

The fact is that his cry of horror, uttered when he turned Ferdean over on his back, had penetrated through the chinks and crannies of the walls and door, and reached the sharp ears of the old concierge ; and this personage, an adept at espionage, as these gentry invariably are, now stood outside of Ferdean's door, with his eye glued to the large keyhole. He saw D'Artivan's back, saw him rummaging the treasure-box which he had often seen, and formed some conclusions that will shortly appear, as he watched the ghoul's operations with a gloating look.

The box contained several bags filled with louis d'ors ; but, much to D'Artivan's annoyance, neither his own notes nor the notes of anyone else were there.

“Never mind, he muttered, resignedly ; “perhaps they will never turn up.”

Without expecting to find anything further, he absently lifted the bags out, one by one, and as he removed the last, his hand touched a small morocco box which nearly covered the bottom of the casket. This he seized with renewed curiosity and proceeded to open. To his amazement and delight, it was tightly packed

with precious stones, many of them of large dimensions, and without settings. The most of these gems were diamonds, and of the first quality. To D'Artivan's eyes here was a veritable mine, a fortune, and (thus he reasoned) it was properly his own, since Ferdean had left no visible heirs and no administrator or executor. For several minutes he feasted his eyes upon the glittering jewels, dazzled and speechless. Then he gave way to a paroxysm almost as fierce as that in which he indulged on the night of the duel; but this was a paroxysm of joy.

A stealthy noise outside in the corridor now finally restored him to his senses; and hastily replacing the contents of the box, he closed and locked it, and placed it under the bed, at the side of its dead owner. Then, after putting the overturned table upon its legs, he cautiously opened the door and, seating himself in the leathern-covered chair, with the unlucky pipe in his mouth, and his back toward the door, he assumed the peculiar, drooping position in which he had so often found Ferdean, and waited for developments.

Scarcely five minutes had elapsed, when a slow and shuffling step approached the entrance and halted there. D'Artivan's heart leaped into his throat, but he remained motionless. Then a gruff voice accosted him:

"Good night, Monsieur Ferdean; have you taken your little walk yet?"

"Aha!" thought the false Ferdean; "this is fortunate, upon my word. Ferdean was to take a little walk to-night, it seems; perhaps it is his habit to do so. Well, pardieu! I will take it for him, since he is *de trop*."

Then, subduing his voice to the tones and accents of the real Ferdean, he replied:

"No; but I am going out directly."

"Mon Dieu!" grumbled the concierge; "you always

require me to sit outside of your door until you return; and you do not go out so late before."

This did not sound so well to D'Artivan; on the contrary, it somewhat disconcerted him. But he answered, in the same voice as before:

"Go to bed."

"How?" cried the concierge, raising his harsh voice, as if indignant at this unceremonious dismissal. "Do you not wish, then, to pay the ten sous to-night?"

D'Artivan was becoming alarmed. Every time he spoke he was in danger of being discovered to this wretch of a concierge. Besides, a visitor, even at this hour, was at least possible.

"Curse the rascal," he muttered, between his teeth. But he said aloud:

"Go, go, you shall have your ten sous all the same, to-morrow."

"Oh, if that is the same thing to you, certainly. Good-night, Monsieur Ferdean." And after peering curiously into the chamber at the dismantled bed, the concierge shambled away.

D'Artivan waited until all was quiet; then, stealthily rising, he crept to the bed, and without looking under it groped his hand for the box. As he drew it from its hiding place, something soft moved quickly over his hand.

With a shriek of terror, but still clutching the casket, he sprang back from the cot, rushed to the door, and, more than half mad with a nameless fear, succeeded in locking it, thrust the key in his pocket, and fled down the rickety stairway.

As he emerged into the street, which was now as dark as the mouth of a cavern, his arm was suddenly clutched by a bony hand, and a rasping voice whispered in his ear:

"My ten sous, Monsieur Ferdean—and ten louis for waiting!"

## CHAPTER XIII.

### THE CONCIERGE'S STORY.

In those terrible years of 1789-93 the self-constituted authorities who had usurped the legitimate functions of the monarchy, "in order to restore peace to France and prosperity to the nation," were not only powerless to prevent, but were willing to encourage, the crimes committed by "the people," who were their real supporters; and by permitting them to prey upon each other they found excuses for the terrible crimes and excesses of which they themselves were constantly guilty.

The supposed murder of an unknown man, evidently an aristocrat from his attire, by the money-changer (who was doubtless attacked for the purpose of robbery) did not much disturb the neighborhood, or elicit much attention from the public. On the night of the catastrophe, a gendarme, passing by the tenement where Ferdean lodged, had found the concierge lying in the open doorway, insensible from a severe blow he had received in the temple from some hard instrument, and was carried up to his attic. The police were notified some hours later, and an officer was sent to take the concierge's statement. He told the following story:

He had gone down to the street entrance at ten o'clock, previous to closing the house for the night, and while standing there Ferdean, the foreigner who rented the rear room in the fourth story, came running down the stairs at an astonishing rate of speed, with something heavy in his hand. Thinking that the house was on fire, or that something dreadful was the matter with the



lodger, he, the concierge, had called to him to stop and explain, and had caught hold of his coat to detain him for the moment, when the "miserable" had whirled around, without a word to him, and struck him a terrible blow on the head with the thing he carried in his hand, and he knew no more until he found himself in his own bed."

The concierge declared that he had not yet visited the room of Ferdean, being yet too weak to do so; and now volunteered to go with the officer and make an examination of the premises.

The dead body was found under the bed, but the face was horribly mutilated by an enormous rat which fled to its hole when the horror-stricken pair pulled the cot away. The rat had no doubt grown fat upon Ferdean's crumbs, but this had not prevented it from also preying upon Ferdean's body; and, thanks to its ravages and the blood-dye which clung there, the face of the corpse was absolutely unrecognizable. The concierge, however, insisted that it was not the money-changer, but a young man who had called to see him before dark, on business that had often brought him there before.

Nothing more was elicited from the concierge of any special importance; and nothing whatever was discovered in the way of valuables. Evidently, Ferdean had decamped, taking his portables with him. Upon searching the pockets of the dead man, several letters from women were found, addressed to a fictitious name which D'Artivan had given them; and these, together with the strange clothing on the body, the presence of the bloody dagger—known by the concierge to have belonged to Ferdean—as well as the other significant circumstances which we have already recounted, were considered sufficiently corroborative to justify the officer's report at the Prefecture to the effect that Ferdean had committed

the murder, etc., and had fled from the scene of the crime with all his valuables, after knocking down the concierge, who had attempted to question him about his extraordinary haste.

Formalities were hastily gone through with at the morgue, and at the Prefect's, and the "unknown" was buried out of sight and forgotten—except by two or three persons, from whom we shall hear again.

Meanwhile, D'Artivan, who had recognized the cunning concierge at the door, and in his desperation had launched the corner of the box at the latter's head, with excellent effect, as we have seen, reached his lodgings without attracting any notice from wayfarers or policemen. There he remained for a few days, and then transferred his domicile to the northwestern portion of the city. He had found a little house in the Faubourg St. Honore, the owner of which had fled to England to save his head from Robespierre's vengeance. Now, this unfortunate refugee was no other than the Marquis of B——, whose presence among the living we shall presently explain. He had left this house, the situation of which was extremely secluded, in the charge of a faithful servant, his old valet, Barbaroux, who lived in it entirely alone—or had been doing so until about a fortnight before the incident of Ferdean's death; an incident, by the way, by no means unimportant to the truthful history of the lives we are following in these eventful chapters.

The fact is, the Marquis had secretly returned to Paris. In a safe disguise, he had gone to this house some weeks before the events we are about to describe, was received by Barbaroux with joyful effusiveness, and had then informed his servant that he should again be absent for perhaps a week, and would then return to remain in concealment there until the insurgents were

reduced to subjection, and peace restored to Paris. Then he had disappeared.

The Marquis went, at the risk of his head, on a mission of revenge. His destination was Caen, in the province of Normandy, where the supporters of the king were numerous. From there he dispatched a message to Sir Philip Belmore, informing him that he desired another meeting with him, and that, since he could not come to Paris without falling into the hands of Robespierre and his friends, he hoped his mortal enemy, Sir Philip, would accord him a meeting either in Normandy or Maine, etc.

The reply which the vindictive nobleman received from the baronet astounded no less than it enraged him. It ran thus :

“You demand what you are pleased to call ‘satisfaction’ from me, for the second time. As you had no excuse for calling me out in the first place, so you have none now for calling me to account for defeating you. I had your life a score of times on the point of my sword, and refused to take it. I determined, rather than have your blood on my hands, to effectually prevent you from continuing your persecution of a lady whom you had threatened because she refused your unwelcome addresses. I will now inform you that if you insist on my meeting you again, I will go to Elbeuf for that purpose; but I also warn you that, while I shall not kill you, I shall do worse. I cut off your nose with your own sword in the duel at Boulogne; in the duel at Elbeuf I shall cut off your ears.”

Upon receiving this fearful epistle, the Marquis was delirious with rage. But he did not “insist” after that; on the contrary, he returned to the charming little house in the aristocratic Faubourg, and sat down to plot

against his enemy from behind a position which ensured the safety of his ears.

Since his duel with Sir Philip Belmore, the Marquis had become a monomaniac. Night and day he brooded over his hideous disfigurement. Unskillful treatment had allowed suppuration to follow, then there was a farther ravage—caries of the bone; and, whether from accidental inoculation or neglect, the disease in his nose was found or believed to be incurable, and at all events he found it impossible to wear an artificial nose. He was therefore compelled to wear merely an ugly green flap over that portion of his face, except when for a few minutes in his flying passages from one refuge to another he had to endure the attachment, and when the flap was removed his appearance was frightful.

The sight of his own features, therefore, was to the Marquis a constant reminder that he owed his mutilation to the Englishman who was admitted familiarly into the presence of the woman whom he believed he loved to madness, but who, after his quarrel with the baronet and his terrible humiliation almost under the eyes of her to whom he had thought to pose as a Hector, had spurned and scorned him. Hopeless jealousy, hatred of his rival, and the burning desire to revenge himself not only upon Sir Philip and Helene, but upon all those who were associated with these two at the time of his unfortunate encounter, had brought him back to Paris at the very time that hundreds of the noblesse were turning their faces from it. These vindictive feelings had grown in strength and fierceness, until they had induced a species of insanity. In short, the Marquis of B—— had come to Paris with the inexorable purpose of exterminating every one of the party who had caused, assisted in, or witnessed his punishment and disgrace at Boulogne.



Soon after he had thus settled himself in Paris, he set about procuring an instrument of his systematic vengeance. He wanted a tool, and a capable one; and by capability he meant cunning, intelligence, cupidity, indifference to misfortune, pain and death—to others.

Accident brought exactly such a person to his very door, as we shall presently see.

One evening before dusk, as Barbaroux stood inside the open wicket in front of the villa, mildly contemplating the few passers-by, his attention was drawn to a light chaise which had stopped immediately in front of the garden entrance.

The occupant of the chaise, a richly but rather showily dressed man of somewhat sinister appearance, possibly owing to a vivid and ugly scar across his left cheek, was leaning out of the vehicle and attentively examining the premises.

This unusual inspection alarmed Barbaroux, who was naturally at all times alert, on his master's account, for whatever might occur at all suspicious in its appearance in the vicinity. He therefore began to scrutinize the stranger furtively, asking himself if it were possible this man could be a spy? But no, that was not probable; he was dressed like a cavalier, and the "republicans" went either shabbily dressed or attired with extreme simplicity. Yes, assuredly, this was a man of fashion—nothing more harmful than that. And yet—

Barbaroux's reflections, which were shrewd in the main, were interrupted at this juncture.

"My good fellow," said the man in the chaise, in a patronizing tone, "do you live here?"

Barbaroux, while secretly incensed by the manner of the stranger, was at the same time re-assured by it. Detectives, gens d'armes, and spies, did not assume such supercilious airs. He answered, somewhat reservedly:

"Certainly, Monsieur; otherwise I should not be making myself so much at home."

"Oh," ejaculated the man, with an amused laugh. Then, a little less flippantly:

"Well, then, I presume you are taking care of the place for the Marquis of B——, since his—hem—health requires him to be absent for a—an indefinite time, eh?"

This speech sounded suspicious to Barbaroux, and his uneasiness began to return. He made no reply, but fixed his gray eyes on the stranger with a searching expression which the latter mistook, for he exclaimed, with a repetition of his unpleasant laugh:

"Oh, you need not say to yourself—'this is an inquisitive person, who meddles with other people's business!' Pardieu, my friend, I am not that kind. 'I have business of my own, do you see? And as for those damned sans culottes, those rascallions who are razing Paris—well, do you understand, a gentleman has no longer an income, thanks to them, since the butchers have gone to killing in the provinces. Very well, then, to waste no more time about it, my business here is to ascertain if this house—which is very pretty, but which the Marquis found too lonesome, perhaps, although, presto, it exactly suits my taste in that respect—can be leased to a gentleman of means and refinement for, say one year."

Barbaroux, much relieved by this explanation, gravely shook his head.

"I have had no instructions to let the place, Monsieur," he said, politely.

The stranger looked disappointed. After reflecting a moment, he asked:

"Well, at all events, can you not write to the Marquis, and ask his permission to do so? It is I who want the lease. I am pleased with the locality, and I think

the house is just what I require, as I am unmarried. And besides, if you succeed in inducing the Marquis to let it to me, I will retain you in it, since I like your looks, and would need no recommendations from you."

"Certainly, Monsieur, I can do that, I suppose," assented the valet.

"Ah, thank you. Get me a pen and paper, then, and I will write my name and address on it, so that you may notify me when you hear from your master."

Every word of this conversation was overheard by the Marquis himself, from his "little place of observation" behind the jalousie of the parlor window, the sash of which he had softly raised for the purpose. The moment that Barbaroux entered the house, therefore, to get the writing materials, his master beckoned him into a rear apartment, and closing the door:

"Listen. That is the very man I want," said he, in an unusually animated tone. "Get his name and residence in full, and tell him that you will do your best to secure the place for him on his own conditions—that he retains you in his service. Say, indifferently, that the terms will no doubt be very moderate, since the Marquis does not wish to sell the property, but simply to keep it occupied during his absence from Paris. Tell him, also, that as soon as you get a reply from London, which will be no longer than four days hence, you will bring my written answer to him."

Barbaroux, who was a servant to the old regime, was too well trained to exhibit any of the surprise he felt upon receiving this singular order; but went out of the room to execute it with the same impassive countenance with which he had entered. When he returned a few minutes afterward, he found the Marquis walking the floor rapidly, and smiling in a most peculiar manner.

"Aha, my good Barbaroux," said he, in so cheerful

a tone that the old servant stared at him this time with open and pleased surprise; his master never since his misfortune having spoken in any other than a morose voice; "this shall be called a white day. But you do not understand, I see. Well, I will tell you this much now; I saw this—ah (reading the address eagerly) D'Artivan, and heard all he said, while you conversed with him. I understand the fellow's physiognomy, and I am sure he is a scoundrel. Well, I want a scoundrel to live here, here where I can see him whenever I choose, without exposing myself. In four days, at this hour, you will carry to him my answer, which will be dated from London, of course, and addressed to you, authorizing you to let the place to him, provided he retains you here in his service in the same capacity in which you served me. My letter, which I will give to you to read to-morrow, will tell you to make such arrangements with the gentleman as you may deem proper, in the leasing of the house. And you will then tell him that he can take possession at once."

One week later, the pretty villa in the Faubourg St. Honore had a new master; so did Barbaroux. The Marquis of B—— had secured a tenant who was ere long to be something more to him, as we are speedily to learn.

On the very next day this eccentric landlord began to look up the antecedents of Monsieur Victor D'Artivan. And as he possessed both money and brains, which together constitute the Archimedean lever of which liberal-minded people are so skeptical, the Marquis was not long in making some astonishing discoveries concerning that debonaire gentleman which eventually placed the latter absolutely in his power, and afforded ample proof of the nobleman's sagacity.



## CHAPTER XIV.

### D'ARTIVAN AT THE VILLA.

Crime is often the dupe of its own arts. At all events this was the case with D'Artivan. He had been cunning, and he now endeavored to be cautious. We shall see how it availed him.

When he appeared at the door of the villa with his luggage, he left on the seat of the carriage a small silver-handled casket, covered with blue velvet. He had already entered the door, and the carriage was driving off, when he suddenly recollected.

"My God!" he exclaimed, in accents of terror, as he turned to rush out of the house, "my box, my box! Stop the chaise, stop it, I say! Devils of Tophet, ho—ho, there. Curse you, stop!"

Hatless, excited to the utmost pitch, panting and pale, the terrified adventurer, forgetting decorum, and dropping his grand airs as he would have flung a mask aside, rushed, vociferating and gesticulating down the staid avenue, in angry and desperate pursuit of the vehicle which was bearing his stolen treasure, and, perhaps, the evidence of his crime, straight toward the Pont Neuf.

It was not until he had raced nearly to the Seine that he overtook the driver, who was much astonished to hear his pompous fare yelling hoarsely behind him, and to see him transformed from a fine gentleman into the semblance of a drunken roysterer. D'Artivan lost no time in scrambling into the chaise, and was driven back

to the villa hugging his precious casket with nervous tenacity.

Barbaroux, who had followed him as far as the pavement when he took flight, had remained there as if dumbfounded, which in truth he was; and had nearly convinced himself that the new tenant had suddenly gone mad, when the chaise again whirled up to the gate and deposited the trowsled fare for the second time on the pavement.

It was Ferdean's box—in disguise—which the Gascon had in his hands. Thinking it a convenient receptacle for the jewels (which he could only dispose of, with any degree of prudence, in small lots and at intervals), he had decided to preserve it, especially as it was an antique. But, in order that if seen in his possession by any one who might recognize it as Ferdean's, he had bought some velvet cloth and an adjustable silver handle, and with these had completely changed its outside appearance. The inside he had not altered; and thus, while drawing attention to it by its showy covering, he neglected, at the same time, to remove or cover up the tell-tale inscription on the ebony inside. This inscription was in Arabic, a language which D'Artivan did not understand; and, as he felt no curiosity about it, he gave it no thought whatever.

Strange as it may appear, any honest soothsayer would have recommended Monsieur D'Artivan, after reading his horoscope, to neglect the study of any other language rather than Arabic. But then Monsieur would not have believed it.

As he entered the house this time, Barbaroux, who had quietly preceded him into the vestibule, politely took the box out of his hand, intending to carry it up to his chamber for him. But D'Artivan hastily plucked it out of the valet's fingers, turning somewhat red in the face

as he did so, and hurried to his room, without uttering a word.

That night Barbaroux, while assisting the Marquis to undress, told him of the affair of the casket.

The Marquis was interested, and asked a number of questions. He was an astute person; he was fond of studying character, and prided himself on his accurate judgment of physiognomy. He had studied the Gascon's face from his retreat behind the venetian blind in the parlor, and had said to Barbaroux: "The fellow is a scoundrel." Therefore, he was predisposed to look with suspicion on his tenant's peculiar conduct; and his conclusion now was that the casket had a history, or at least contained a secret. In both these surmises the Marquis was right.

At the end of his reflections, he said to the valet

"When Monsieur goes out to-morrow morning for his breakfast, we will have a look at that casket of which he is so careful."

Accordingly, when D'Artivan started out of the house in search of a café, Barbaroux followed him with his eyes as far as the corner of the boulevard, and saw him turn toward the quay of the Tuilleries; then he hastened into his master's chamber to inform him that the way was clear for their little visit of inspection.

D'Artivan had left his bed-room in disorder, and numerous garments were carelessly tossed here and there on various pieces of furniture. But after a careful search of the room they had not found the box. They sat down to consider.

"It must be in that chest," observed Barbaroux, pointing to one D'Artivan had brought, and which had been deposited in one corner of the bed-room.

But when he attempted to raise the lid, he discovered it was locked.

"Never mind;" he remarked, "I can open anything that any locksmith can. I was an apprentice to that great master who taught the King himself to make cabinet locks and open them without keys." And with this excellent recommendation of himself, he ran out of the room, returning in a few minutes with a nail and some pieces of wire. Getting down on his knees before the chest with the air of an expert workman, he inserted his wire, felt the tumbrils, poked about with the nail and the wire, and presently raised the lid of the chest. The box was there, snugly cushioned on the top of a varicolored dressing-gown.

Fortunately, thanks to the unheard-of carelessness of its possessor, it was not locked; otherwise the valet's skill would have been subjected to a very severe and probably a futile test, since the lock was of oriental and complicated workmanship.

The Marquis examined the jewels, as they lay sparkling in their morocco case, with some curiosity; but his interest was centered in the casket itself; and he at once directed Barbaroux to remove everything from it. Then the inscription caught his eye.

"Aha, I thought so!" he exclaimed, triumphantly; "we are about to arrive. Fetch me a pen and a tablet."

The Marquis knew no more of Arabic than did D'Artivan, but he was in this case more inquisitive. So, when the tablet was brought he carefully copied the text just as it appeared. Having done this, Barbaroux replaced everything as it was before, and, closing the lid of the chest, the two worthies left the apartment and proceeded to that of the Marquis.

After closing the door, the latter said:

"You will take this copy to the libraire Bossuet, and ask him to decipher it and give you the translation in



writing. Make haste, so as to return before Monsieur what's his name."

While Barbaroux was off attending to his order, D'Artivan returned from the café and went to his bedroom. In a few minutes the Marquis, who was in his own chamber, heard a great outcry, then a door violently opened, and D'Artivan's voice shouting:

"Hilloa, I say, Barbaroosa, where the devil are you? I want you this instant."

The Marquis started and changed color.

"Peste!" exclaimed he, under his breath; "we came away without locking the chest! However," he added, with an expressive shrug, "we could not have done so with only a nail and some bits of wire. Besides, nothing has been taken away, and he can not accuse Barbaroux of theft. It is quite clear to me that this man's emotion proceeds from fright as well as anger. Hear how he roars! Well, we shall see if we have had our trouble for nothing, when Barbaroux gets back. Devil take the fellow, if Barbaroux does not come quickly he will break into my room; and in that case, pardieu, I shall be obliged to use some cold discipline."

In truth, as the Marquis picked up his sword from a chair where it was always conveniently at hand, it seemed not unlikely that he would presently be compelled to use it, for at that moment the irate Gascon, who had rushed through the corridor vociferating loudly, reached the nobleman's door, which he tried to force open.

"Ah, you are there, you rascal!" cried he in a fury. "Open, then, I tell you; it is I, your master, who has found you out! Your master, do you hear? Ah, sacre, yes, who will give you his boot, you prying maladroit!"

What would have happened if D'Artivan had burst into the Marquis' bedroom we can only surmise. It is

certain that the latter was not more than six feet from the door, with a drawn sword in his hand, and a threatening scowl on his face, ready to receive the besieger. But at that critical instant Barbaroux entered the house and, hearing the uproar above, at once concluded his master's hiding-place was discovered, and with a groan of anguish hurried up-stairs. His emotion so confused him, in fact, that before he was aware of it he had rushed into the hands of his new master, who immediately clutched him, and proceeded to administer sundry rough shakings to his anatomy.

We must say that, under this unexpected and decidedly exasperating treatment, Barbaroux displayed a self-possession and readiness that admirably fitted him for the delicate position he held toward his prescribed master. Relieved to find that the latter was still in safety, he began to comprehend the cause of the new one's wrath and excitement. He pretended to be intensely astonished and sorrowfully indignant, as he drew himself out of reach and exclaimed, with an inimitable air of reproach:

"Monsieur, do you not find the house to be all that I represented to you? I assure Monsieur that it is not my fault if Monsieur is displeased with the arrangements, or with the appointments, since—"

"Thousand devils! will you cease your clatter?" shouted D'Artivan, who had not himself ceased. "Now you rascal, listen to me. Look me, in the eye, scelerat, and mind—I am watching you! Do not lie to me, for I shall discover it, I warn you, and then, sacre! so much the worse for you. Come, are you going to speak up?"

Barbaroux certainly had as yet found no opportunity to "speak up," until his excited master paused over this unexpected question.

"I beg Monsieur's pardon," he now began, in a quiet

and respectful tone, "if I confess that I do not know the cause of Monsieur's anger. If Monsieur is offended because I went out during his absence, I would like to be permitted to explain that I have a sick friend in the neighborhood, who is very poor and not able to employ a nurse; and I went to see if he was in want of anything. But I do not think I was gone more than three-quarters of an hour."

"Stop, I tell you, in the devil's name!" cried the Gascon, stamping his foot in desperation. "Morableu, you will drown me with words. I do not want to know anything about your sick people; to the devil or Salpetriere with them. Tell me this: Why did you enter my bed-room, which you did not put in order because you were too busy, eh, in ransacking, eh—I wish you to tell me at once, do you hear?"

Barbaroux gazed at his excited patron with a look of the most profound commiseration. So candid and deliberate was his manner, that D'Artivan's excitement began to subside; and his features all at once betrayed another emotion—fear. He devoured Barbaroux with his eyes, as the latter said, impassively:

"I do not understand Monsieur at all."

"What," exclaimed D'Artivan, with a perceptible tremor in his moderated voice; "did you not go into my bed-room while I was absent at the café, and open my chest, which I had before locked, leaving it unlocked after you?"

The valet's face assumed an expression of profound astonishment. He, however, denied vehemently having done anything of the kind. In the midst of his protestation he stopped abruptly, made a significant gesture, and said, with an air of supreme conviction:

"Ah, mon Dieu, I understand it all very well. Do you not know, Monsieur, that the spies of Robespierre

and Danton are making domiciliary visits at the houses of all those who are 'suspects?' and is not the Marquis more than a 'suspect?' Well, the wretches have been in this street for several days. Without a doubt they have been watching this house; and seeing both Monsieur and myself leave it within the hour, one of them has slipped in and rummaged the premises. Peste! Your boxes were opened, you say? Well, that is not at all surprising; they are as expert as the house-breakers, which indeed many of them have been, and do not mind bolts and bars and—locks, any more than a ghost."

D'Artivan's cheeks resumed their natural color, as he listened to this very reasonable explanation. He held out his hand to Barbaroux.

"Forgive me, my friend," he said, in a tone that, for him, was almost amiable; "without doubt it is as you say, it is those prowling agents of the jacobins. Well, they carried nothing off; let us say nothing more about the matter; but do not go out again in my absence; it is not safe, as you now see."

And with a buoyant step, and the swaggering gait which he had so laboriously cultivated, D'Artivan returned to his room, where he remained only long enough to attire himself in a plum-colored costume, for a drive in the Champs Elysees, and then left the house.

Meanwhile the Marquis had been waiting impatiently in his own apartment for Barbaroux' return; and the moment the latter entered he exclaimed:

"You have been gone a long time; well, that means that you have succeeded in getting what I required."

Barbaroux replied by giving to his master a piece of paper, at which the latter had scarcely glanced before he exclaimed:

"Aha, did I not tell you that this D'Artivan is a scoundrel? Listen to this:



“‘The literal translation of the Arabic text you were pleased to send me reads thus: Emil Ferdean, Jeweler and Broker, Smyrna.’

“Now do you see,” continued the Marquis, triumphantly, that when we looked at the ebony box we found in the bottom of it the means of proving the fellow to be a scoundrel? Yes, in the bottom of the box we found the mystery.”

Barbaroux looked very much as though he would like less mystification, for certainly he had not had thus far much light thrown upon the queer actions of either the master or the tenant. He began now to ask questions of the Marquis—with his eyes; and the latter, observing his puzzled looks, suddenly remembered that as yet he had given the man no explanation.

“I see you do not understand,” said he; “let me explain. Last week, as you knew, the *Moniteur* gave the particulars of a strange murder committed, it was believed, by one Emil Ferdean, in his own apartment in a street called after the barrier des Gobelins. The murdered man was found under the bed, his face soaked in dry blood, and horribly disfigured by rats that had gnawed it; so much so that it was not recognizable. Ferdean himself had disappeared, and was charged with the murder. Now, I have an idea that it was Ferdean who was murdered for the wealth which we saw in the casket that bears his name, and which was no doubt his property. If so, our ‘scoundrel’ is the murderer. To-night, he shall meet an inquisitor here; and it will then appear whether or not my suspicions are correct. If they are, why then—I shall own this Victor D’Artivan, body and soul.

And with a glance at Barbaroux, which sent a shiver through his blood, so full of dark, malignant meaning were the nobleman’s eyes, he glided out of the chamber.

## CHAPTER XV.

### THE MYSTERIOUS VISITOR.

It was past twelve o'clock that night when, after a day spent in the feverish pursuit of those peculiar pleasures which to the boulevardier have at all periods been the chief end of existence, D'Artivan returned to the villa in the Faubourg St. Honore, tired, heated and peevish. In the vestibule he found Barbaroux waiting for him.

"Pardon, M<sup>onsieur</sup>," said the valet, addressing him in a low tone, as if afraid of being overheard; "there is a stranger now in the parlor, who called two hours ago to see you. He insists that his business is serious and concerns yourself particularly, and he will not go until he has had some conversation with you."

D'Artivan listened uneasily.

"Who is this nocturnal caller?" asked he, in an irritated voice.

"He will not give his name."

"The devil," ejaculated D'Artivan, with a still more troubled expression. Like all uncaught criminals, he was the constant slave of that merciless master who never gives place to any other than Nemesis—Dread.

"Will Monsieur see the visitor?" ventured Barbaroux, who appeared to secretly desire that he should.

"Peste, yes, I suppose so," replied D'Artivan, who started grumbling toward the parlor, not observing, in his pre-occupation, the gratified smile upon the man's face as he turned away.

The parlor was darkly lighted when the unwilling

host entered it; but he had no fault to find with that, since he felt it impossible to conceal the anxiety which clouded his countenance, or to control the nervousness of his manner.

The uneasy glance he cast around him rested upon the figure of a tall and sombrely dressed person seated in a recess near the entrance. This man was surprisingly dark, and wore very long black locks that were pushed back over his ears, and an enormous black beard and moustaches.

D'Artivan stopped short and gazed without speaking at his lugubrious visitor, who also remained silent, and sat motionless in his seat, his two penetrating eyes fixed, with an indescribable expression in them, upon the face of the Gascon.

The latter, feeling more and more uncomfortable, at length cleared his throat with an effort, and asked, hesitatingly:

"You wish to see me?"

"Yes, Monsieur," answered the stranger, in a deliberate tone, and without moving. Then, as though the host and visitor had changed places, he motioned toward a chair, and said, in the same tone:

"Pray sit down."

Incensed by this cool assumption of his own privileges, D'Artivan said, hastily:

"I will attend to my own comfort, if you please. What do you wish of me?"

"Well, really," replied the other, in the slow and unembarrassed manner of one who is perfectly at home, "I have so much to say to you that it would be decidedly fatiguing for you to remain standing all the time you are listening to me."

D'Artivan, now amazed and angered at the audacity of the man, exclaimed, roughly:

"Sir, if you do not instantly state your business, if you have any here, I will have you thrown into the street."

The strange visitor eyed him with a look of ironical reproach, and coolly observed, without removing his gaze for a moment:

"Upon my word, Monsieur, that would not be at all agreeable to me, and I should vigorously object. But, to the point, since you prefer to take your approaching shock standing, I will not again insist upon your being seated, while I administer it."

"In the devil's name, who are you?" cried D'Artivan, now pale with apprehension, but equally hot with exasperation.

"In the name of justice, you mean, do you not?" retorted the visitor. Then, abruptly changing his tone and manner:

"Come, we shall be serious as you please. First, then, let me recite: You were in the habit, until a fortnight ago or less, of calling upon a certain jeweler and broker, residing in a certain obscure street near the barriers. The name of this broker was Ferdean."

The speaker paused a moment, that he might push a chair toward D'Artivan, who had suddenly found his legs giving way under him, and his breath leaving him, at the mention of the Arab's name. As soon as he had sunk down into the seat, the man continued:

"This broker Ferdean had from time to time loaned you sundry neat little sums upon your own notes which you secured on realty in Gascony. These notes and securities, with many others of the same kind, he deposited in a small japanned tin box which he nailed to the inside of his bedrail, beneath the slats upon which the mattress rested. Ferdean had arranged this ingenious—and, as it proved, quite safe—hiding-place because, as I



have said, he had many more such notes as yours, the whole aggregating nearly one hundred and ninety thousand francs."

"Thousand devils!" groaned D'Artivan, whose chagrin at not having discovered this Midas-nest banished for the moment even his terror at the revelation.

"Quite a fortune, yes, for some one," observed the unknown, watching the expression of disappointed greed in the other's face with amused contempt. Then resuming:

"Nine days ago, at about ten o'clock in the evening, this man, Emil Ferdean, was stabbed with an oriental dagger, and killed, on the floor of his room—"

"Hold on! It was not Ferdean that was murdered, it was a—"

D'Artivan had bounded from his chair at the words "Ferdean was stabbed," the blood rushing to his heart, and, in his supreme excitement, forgetting precaution, everything save the blind desire to divert the charge which he believed was about to be hurled at him. But in the middle of his unguarded speech he stopped abruptly, and the blood surged from his heart to his face. He sat down, quivering with excitement, and turned his eyes away from those of the terrible accuser that were searching him like the surgeon's probe.

"Ferdean was murdered," said the man, slowly dwelling on each terrible syllable, and ignoring D'Artivan's contradiction as if he had not heard it.

"Ferdean was killed by a certain person who had called upon him that evening before dark, and who had been fully described by the concierge who had often seen him when he called on the broker."

D'Artivan uttered a groan and shivered, but offered no other interruption.

"When this person left the broker's room, on the

night of the murder, he carried away with him an antique, foreign-made coffer of ebony wood—”

This time D'Artivan did not groan, he shouted. He was out of his chair again, and with violent gestures had checked the mysterious visitor.

“Devils of Hell!” he cried; “then it was not the spies of that monster Robespierre who were sneaking into my—my rooms this morning. Ah, that idiot Barbaroosa, his brains are only cheese, he is a mis-er-a-ble, —the ass! Oh, I ought to have known; you are—you come from the Pre—”

Again he stopped short, at the moment he was about to say “Prefecture,” and again he sat down, and as before averted his face.

“This antique box,” continued the stranger, as deliberately as at first, “contained all of Ferdean’s wealth except the securities in the box which was concealed under the mattress of his miserable bed, and which the murderer did not find. The murderer and robber has sold some of the jewels, and has spent some of the gold that was in the casket of ebony; but he can not continue to draw on the treasure except by the permission of another person who knows all that I have been narrating to you.”

At this point D'Artivan arose, this time silently, slowly, and crept toward the door. His emotions were almost beyond his control. He had at this moment but one overwhelming thought, to steal into his bedroom, seize his precious casket, if it were indeed still there, and fly with it from Paris.

But even while he was revolving these thoughts in his half-crazed brain, and stealthily moving toward the door, the inexorable visitor said to him, without giving him a glance:

"You need not go in search of the ebony casket, my friend, you will not find it in your room."

D'Artivan turned quickly. For a while he stared, speechless, dumb; his blood-shot eyes protruding, his hands convulsively twitching. Then a cry like that of an animal escaped his lips; and without any more warning than Ferdean had given him, he sprang at the stranger's throat, clutching a dagger which he had drawn from under his coat. But he was anticipated; and he almost thrust his face against a pistol's muzzle.

"Fool," exclaimed the unknown, with a sneer on his bearded lips, although his eyes betrayed suppressed anger; "do you think I would come to tell a murderer of his crimes in his own domicile, and that at midnight and alone, without the means of preventing his committing another?"

D'Artivan dropped his dagger, dropped heavily into his seat, and covered his face with his shaking hands.

"This man is Satan!" groaned he, despairingly. Then, suddenly raising his head, and regarding the other with a devouring look:

"I do not know who you are," said he; "and you refuse to reveal yourself. But I see that you know something, though not all of what transpired at the money-changer's. Now, I swear to you this—that I did not kill Ferdean; that he attacked me with a knife; and while pursuing me around the room, I threw a quilt from his bed over his face; that he became entangled in its folds, and, falling upon the knife, it entered his side and mortally wounded him. Then, as I knew that he had no relations, and none to leave his possessions to, I took the box and carried it away."

The stranger listened to this rapidly uttered confes-

sion with folded arms and a countenance that revealed nothing. When it was concluded, he said, quietly :

“You admit the robbery ; that is enough to hang you. As for the murder, you could never disprove your guilt. However, as I have decided to use you, I intend to give you a chance for your life. Barbaroux, come in !”

As if he had been listening outside and waiting for this summons, Barbaroux entered immediately. In his hand he carried a leathern ink-bottle, a sheet of paper and a quill-pen, all which he deposited on a table. Then he stood a few paces off, and silently waited further orders from the mysterious “guest.” The latter, pointing to the paper, said:

“This is a full confession of the crimes which you committed against Emil Ferdean and—the State. You will sign it in the same handwriting as that which appears in your signatures to the notes you gave to Ferdean. I have those notes in my possession. Under certain circumstances, it is possible that you may have them returned to you canceled, but not now. After you have signed, you and I shall each take an oath; you, that you will serve me in any capacity, at any time, in any manner, and to any extent to which I may choose to employ you, and that without delay, failure or excuse; I, that so long as you shall continue to do all that you have sworn to do, I will not denounce you nor deliver you into the hands of the law, but will even protect you against it to any reasonable extent, and against my own enemies—who will thus become yours. Read first what is written there, and then sign.”

Nearly blinded by terror, rage and amazement, D'Artivan took the paper in his shaking fingers, and endeavored to read it, but the letters danced like mocking imps before his vision, and the only words he saw



were "murder," and "robbery," staring at him like menaces from the dead. With almost nerveless fingers he scrawled his name at the foot of the damning page, and sank back with a groan.

"Witness the confession, Barbaroux," commanded the stranger; and when the valet had done so:

"Now," said he, turning to D'Artivan, and suddenly tearing from his face and head the beard, moustache and long black locks, "can you not guess who I am?"

But, although D'Artivan saw his metamorphosis accomplished with the greatest astonishment, he showed no signs of recognition, but shook his head.

"No," said he, stupidly; "I should have said you were the Marquis of B——, whom I used to see often on the Boulevards. You certainly resemble him, as I recollect him; but the Marquis lost his nose some time ago. Perhaps you are his brother?"

"Curse you," muttered the Marquis, for it was he, and as he uttered this malediction he ground his teeth.

"Ah, I forgot to—remove my nose," he exclaimed, in a voice the concentrated bitterness of which it would be hard to describe. Then, plucking a wax nose from his face, he stood forth in the full light of a candelabra, that his mutilated face might be seen in all its horrid ugliness by the affrighted Gascon.

"The Marquis—" gasped he, shrinking back in his chair, as though the sight withered his eyeballs.

"Ay, the Marquis," repeated the latter, with icy expressiveness. "And now, since you have identified me, there is no need to delay the second part of our business. Come, let us swear—by our hopes of Heaven, ha, ha, and by our fears of Hell, and by the mothers who bore us, to keep inviolate the oaths we severally and sepa-

rately take here in the presence of each other and in the presence of this honest valet of ours ! ”

Without the energy to insist on being informed of the dubious employment awaiting him, D'Artivan went through the formula passively, scarcely knowing what he was uttering. When this ceremony was ended, the Marquis took up the warrant from the table, walked quietly to the door and, turning at the threshold, said:

“ It is late, Monsieur D'Artivan, and you will want to retire. Good-night.”

“ But my box, my lord, my box, where is it ? ” cried D'Artivan, briskly starting toward him with his hands outspread.

“ Oh, Ferdean's box. Yes, certainly, I shall not allow it to fall into any improper hands, my friend. As for the valuables it contains, Barbaroux will deliver them to you to-morrow. Good-night. We shall have work to do soon—very soon, I assure you, Monsieur D'Artivan ! ”

And without waiting to listen to the protest his “ instrument ” was already beginning, the owner of the villa opened the door and, followed by his faithful servant, master and valet were soon in their respective chambers, and preparing for a night of repose.

As for the tenant, he was lying in a collapsed condition, in the middle of the parlor floor.

## CHAPTER XVI.

### MIRABEAU.

In the eyes of a snail, perhaps, the ambition of Louis XVI. might have appeared lofty; in the eyes of his subjects it appeared puerile and contemptible. He aspired to become a good locksmith; but the people wanted a good governor.

What has been said of other mournful failures may be said of him—he meant well. He had given the laborers and bourgeois a Turgot—that too-excellent minister of finance who desired to reduce taxation, refused to borrow and demanded retrenchment at the Court. But for these offenses he had been deposed at the will of the nobles. He had given them Necker, who did what he could to nurse the finances back into health. But Necker, like his predecessor, became odious, because he exposed to the people the fact that the real leeches that were draining the life-blood of the nation were the nobility. The nobles demanded his dismissal, the King was weak and the Swiss banker gave way. Calonne, Brienne and other experimentalists followed, and the public health grew worse. At last that dangerous “remedy” which a falling monarch was induced by a desperate minister to adopt was resorted to: the King convoked the States-General to discuss the situation and devise measures for the public relief.

This fatal decision caused consternation in more than one quarter. To Helene Sainte Maur it prefigured the ruin of the royal family.

Helene Sainte Maur was a thorough Frenchwoman

in her pride of country, and a representative one in her ready comprehension of its politics. Her opinions were invited, her judgment respected by every one of the Girondists, as well as by many who had as yet remained outside of that perilous arena which was soon to become a vortex. Roland, an oracle with his coterie, often sought her for advice, for ideas. Before the convoking of the States-General, he went to her with the question:

"Do you not think it absolutely necessary?"

But her reply had startled him:

"The King has committed a frightful mistake. Calonne has rifled the treasury to amuse the people, and broken their backs by levying heavier future burdens upon them. He has built a road to repudiation. This Monseigneur Brienne is an incapable, who will accomplish nothing. Even Calonne's shoes are too large for him. The situation is pitiable, but as yet the 'people' do not know the truth about it. Well, it is now going to be exposed to them. The King will go to the Assembly in a magnificent procession with his courtiers, the main object of which will be to display the grandeur of the noblesse to the hungry representatives of the people, this 'Third Estate,' which outnumbers them three to one. When his Majesty arrives at the hall, he will find three factions already arrayed against each other, secretly waiting to disagree and disunite—to unite against him. And then, when the ragged and tax-ridden representatives of the Tiers-Etat set their eyes upon the sumptuous extravagance of the noblesse, and the sleek faces and arrogant movements of the upper clergy, its hostility will show itself to both orders, and it will set up housekeeping without them. Such a catastrophe will cost the King his throne—perhaps his head."



Some of the nobles and many of the under-clergy had finally come over to the Tiers-État, but the latter had discovered their strength, and were now the real arbiters of the fate of the monarchy. One of their first acts was grimly significant; they elected Dr. Guillotin a representative.

Becoming bolder, the Assembly began to discuss a constitution.

The King, concluding it was time to look after his personal safety, filled the Palace at Versailles with Swiss and other foreign troops. This incensed the "people" to such a degree that they broke open the armourers' shops, armed themselves with their stolen weapons, and organized the National Guards, with Lafayette as Commander-in-chief.

Everything was now radical; the word "conservative" was too dangerous to be spoken, it betrayed "aristocratical tendencies." Everything was in motion, passivity was impossible. Change, change, and again change, was the meaning that Mirabeau's cry in the tribune bore to his colleagues in the Assembly—

"Boldness, boldness, and again—boldness!"

The vulgar fustian of the Commons had charmed the vulgar populace; but the populace so encouraged and flattered the Commons that ere long the latter became insufferable to the other two orders who had, long since, began a struggle against the Tiers-État for supremacy. From this contest emerged—the mountain afterwards the synonym of terror.

Two demagogic spirits in the Assembly were, in the main, responsible for this division—Mirabeau and Robespierre.

This turbulent Mirabeau, at heart an aristocrat, while affecting the habits of a bourgeois, had been long an object of dislike to the noblesse. Finally, they virtually

turned him out of the order; and his then somewhat doubtful fortunes were at once cast with the Commons. At this time the foul-smelling and ragged habitues of the cellars and sewers of Paris were crawling out of their dens and becoming an element of strength. To ingratiate himself with these "sans culottes" Mirabeau opened, and pretended to conduct for awhile, a tailor shop; although it is hardly necessary to say that the proprietor was never, or seldom, seen at his place of business.

Mirabeau was always complaining of being a poor man. But poverty is oftener bred from man's wants than from his necessities, and this was a truism in Mirabeau's case. In one way or another he obtained money frequently, and in considerable sums. For some time he was in receipt of twenty thousand francs a month from "Monsieur," the King's brother, his influence being for awhile of grave importance to the royal family. But Mirabeau, while ostentatiously frugal, indulged himself in numerous extravagances, which benefited no one, and kept his purse lean, and sometimes empty.

One day this Gigas, who was eating his heart out with discontent (that dragon that breeds a thousand plagues), was striding along through the Faubourg St. Germain. He was not often seen in that aristocratic neighborhood now; its memories were somewhat bitter. And on this occasion he seemed in haste to get away from it.

He had turned westward, and was rapidly proceeding in the direction of the Invalides, when he passed the chateau of Mlle. Sainte Maur. At that moment an elegant coupé stopped in front of the chateau, and a footman in blue livery opened the carriage-door. Mirabeau, glancing casually, saw a fairy-like foot, in a deli-

cate buskin, peeping out, as it felt for the lowered carriage-step; and, following the little foot a gloriously beautiful woman. As she crossed the pavement to enter her door, Mirabeau was, for a single instant, within two feet of her, and she naturally gave him a flitting glance. Brief as the contact was, and unconscious as her glance must have been, Mirabeau received a shock. He suddenly stopped.

Mademoiselle also stopped; but she did not notice Mirabeau again. She did not know him, nor was she now conscious that he was there. But he certainly was, rooted to the pavement, as much so as if two hands had been thrust up from beneath it and seized his feet. He was devouring her with his eyes, the superb contour of her person, the classic beauty of her features, the exquisite tints of her complexion. To all else he was oblivious.

Mademoiselle gave the coachman a word or two, and then ran up the steps. The door of the chateau closed upon her, the coupé rolled off, and the footman walked away without observing him. Still he remained. He stared up at the front of the house as though he was on the point of assaulting it. His face became suffused with a deep red hue, his lips murmured indistinct sounds, his eyes grew intensely luminous. After five minutes of this pantomimic display, he passed his hand confusedly over his heavy brow, and passed on with a hasty and nervous stride.

The next day, Mirabeau went to Madame de Valincourt, who knew everyone, and from her learned all that Paris knew of Mlle. Helene Sainte Maur.

On the fifth evening after that he was formally introduced to Helene in the saloon of Madame de Valincourt, who, though actually a royalist, was on excellent terms with all the republican leaders.

Mirabeau was graciously received by Helene, who saw in him one of the chiefs of the great parties who were shaking France to its center. Whenever she fixed her eyes upon his face, which she frequently did, the expression in them was one of profound interest, of unconscious contemplation. As for him, this scrutiny pleased his vanity—which at all times manifested itself, for it was egregious, and increased his self-confidence—which was prodigious. That she had captivated him was apparant to many who saw him following her about during the whole evening. She had kindled volcanic fires within his turbulent bosom which nothing but death could quench, and none knew this better than he. When he was preparing for the fifth time to take his leave of her on that initial night, he said to her, in the accents of smothered passion :

“What they say of you is true: you are Diana made mortal. Well, you have shown me the depths of my own soul.”

After that confession, Helene Sainte Maur’s orbit held another satellite—and a lurid one indeed. But, unlike that of most of her worshipers, the homage of this one was destined to be one of some service to her.

The condition of affairs in the Capital, meanwhile, had become serious, then gloomy, finally threatening; and worse was coming. Paris had fallen before an idol, and that idol was Voltaire; it had fled before an ogre, and that ogre was Mesmer. Voltaire had been deified, and Mesmer banished.

Roland and his co-fanatics had attempted to foster the idea of a new government based upon doctrines dreamed out in the libraries of the Girondists. A “system” resulted, but Satan came to reign over the ideal government of which it was the precursor. Roland’s school was academic, it claimed to be a junta of philosophers.



But with fanatics philosophy is an abyss. Paris fell into this abyss, and became infidel, and nothing any longer was sacred.

France became a country without a God.

The profligacy of Louis XV. had covered half a century; it had devoured everything in the granary Louis XV. died peacefully, however, in a bed draped with gold tissue. On either side of his couch a priest knelt; and these two in less than half an hour had prayed him out of the world and into —.

His successor inherited a crown which he knew not how to wear; the fealty of a people he knew not how to govern; debts that he knew not how to pay. Unfortunately for France, and no less unfortunately for his Queen, was it that, although not a coward, he was a poltroon; although he wished to do right, he was a dolt; although he was not selfish, he was a glutton.

Knowing nothing of statecraft, the King amused himself at a workman's bench, in a leathern apron. Disliking court etiquette and constraint, the Queen, in dimity aprons, played at dairy farming with her young maids of honor, in the white marble Trianon the King had caused to be built for her to make butter in; and all this time the mob of starvelings in the great city were howling for loaves they had not the means to buy.

France itself was impoverished; national bankruptcy, (which afterwards came) impended; and behind the spectre of bankruptcy stood a demon upon whose livid brow was written that word more terrible than all others to a nation—Anarchy.

Discontent was everywhere. France had long been traveling toward revolution; Paris was already ripe for it. The idlers, the criminals, the workmen of Paris had met, fraternized, combined and conspired. Now taught that there was no God, and that conscience was "a

superstition," that man was the lawful prey of man, they were about to let loose their long-repressed passions, and begin a carnival of blood.

The center of this living maelstrom was the Bastille, that fortress of tyranny and sepulchre of hope.

This immense prison, one of the most infamous in all history, was situated in the space now called Place de la Bastille, in the northeastern portion of Paris. Its gloomy stone walls, thirty feet thick at the base and ten at the summit, were penetrated by loop-holes through which a small garrison or guard could easily direct a fire of annihilation with cannon and musketry upon a formidable besieging force. Triple gratings admitted air and fragmentary rays of light into the prison. But these mournful rays came from a sun saddened by the aspect of misery which forever met them within those deep-laid walls. The surrounding walls and gates—barriers—were huge and formidable. The eastern end of the Rue St. Antoine, extending from the Hotel de Ville on the west, opened on the Bastille grounds; and the Faubourg St. Antoine proper, with its network of narrow streets—so dangerous in time of local insurrections—extended from it toward the eastern barriers of the city.

On the night of the 13th July, 1789, the royal session of the Assembly sat in ominous and troubled silence at Versailles, as if waiting to hear the tocsin sounded by the two hundred thousand armed citizens who had that day declared that the Bastille must be razed.

On the day after that sleepless and useless session the threat was fulfilled.

At ten o'clock in the morning, the old and grizzled veteran, Commandant Launay, saw from the roofs of the Bastille thousands of dark objects approaching from four directions. To him, from his lofty outlook, they

appeared like human larvæ, as they crept along the streets. As they came nearer, the hum, not of wings, but of voices, was borne up to him, and he said, as he looked:

"They begin with the Bastille; they will end with the throne."

The streets in the neighborhood of the fortress had since daybreak been thronged with bands of workmen. The Rue St. Antoine had arisen, lit ere daybreak by incendiary fires, and had warmed itself for serious work. The Quartier had been swept by a tourbillon of cavalry which, after killing a few hundreds of the insurgents, had disappeared as rapidly as they had come.

But, as if they had crawled out of the earth, the desperate rabble had again swarmed into the street which now leads from the Place du Trone to the grounds of the Bastille, augmented by citizen-soldiers who were being led by veterans.

And now, beginning with an ominous murmur that rose and swelled into a mighty shout, came the hoarse cry of the commune—"A bas le Bastille!"

The revolution was at hand.

## CHAPTER XVII.

ACHILLE DUDEVANT.

Between the beginning of July and the beginning of October, 1789, events of the utmost importance to both the nation and King had transpired in the French capital. Paris was now a seething vortex, into which its entire population was being drawn, and in the midst of that human maelstrom were those whose history we are writing.

The human stomach is an animal. Fill it to repletion and there is torpor, indifference, stupidity. Supply it generously, and there is energy, good nature and peace. Deny it food, starve it, and it stirs with discontent, and this discontent finally generates hate, rage, frenzy, despair and vengeance.

Such had been the condition of the Parisian stomach—among the working classes—for an indefinite period. The scarcity of bread had increased, and the canaille had grown gaunt and dangerous again. No longer fed on the pabulum of hope, they had succumbed to despair. The King's purse was empty, not a louis d'or remained. Still, there remained to him five hundred horses, the most superb that money, influence and force could procure from all quarters of the globe. These horses, however, were for the sole use of royalty; they were housed in the magnificent crescent-shaped stables at the end of the grand avenue at Versailles; their coats were always well-lined and slick, and the chief veterinary received ten thousand livres a year for keeping them with good appetites.



On the morning of the 5th of October, there was another revolt; hunger could be borne no longer. At an early hour market porters who had nothing to carry in their baskets, poissardes who had no fish to clean, butchers who had no beef to slaughter or serve, the vagabondage of the by-ways, made their way into the Bastille grounds, crying in hoarse or feeble tones:

“A bas les Aristocrats !”

What had they come there for? No one knew except themselves, and as for them, they could give no explanation. They knew what they wanted, however, and they were in search of it. Victory had for the first time met them before the Bastille; perhaps they should find it on the same spot again.

Suddenly, there was another irruption—but this time of women. Hundreds of them came from every street in the neighborhood, pouring into the open space like the torrent of an enormous sewer. These women were scantily clad; their clothing, if rags may be called clothing, hanging loosely upon them and gaping with rents. They were gaunt and pale and haggard—the most of them; but here and there was one whose stout and brawny frame famine had not attacked or could not conquer. Except these few, the young girls, the young women, the old and hideous hags, all wore the same look of ravening hunger, of wild-eyed despair, and vindictive fury.

Here was a picture of Inferno.

Suddenly, a man pushed his way into their midst. He was dressed like a schoolman, was about thirty years of age, and had a shrewd face which was lighted by two observant black eyes. The name of this man was Achille Dudevant, of whom we have already heard.

What was he doing there?

This question rose to the lips of some of the women,

who began to eye him with looks that were at once suspicious and threatening.

But Dudevant showed neither hesitation nor fear. With a flourish of his hand he commanded silence; and the poor creatures, who had come there for they knew not what, crowded eagerly around him, and for a time ceased to screech and curse.

"My good women," began Dudevant, in a loud voice; "you have come here to do something, have you not?"

"Yes, yes, my God, yes!" screamed the beldames, in chorus, flinging their skinny arms over their unkempt heads.

"Good. Then—listen to me. Do you know the way to Versailles?"

"Yes, yes, we know it, we know it! Madame Deficit is there," came the shrill chorus.

Dudevant laughed. The canaille had been taught by Danton to call the Queen by that name, which meant that she had bankrupted France, and caused all their misery. He did not correct them, but continued:

"Versailles is twelve miles from Paris, by the finest avenue in the world. It is twenty-five toises wide, and shaded with fine linden and poplar trees. You will enjoy a promenade on it, and you have the right to do so. Well, the King lodges at the other end of that avenue; and every day thirteen hundred idle people are sumptuously fed from his tables."

"A bas les Aristocrats!"

Twice the frenzied cry was repeated, before Dudevant could proceed.

"You are right," shouted he, as soon as he could make himself heard above the tintamarre. "Well, you are hungry, my poor friends, and I have come to tell you that there are a thousand cart-loads of corn at Versailles. Go there, and you will find plenty of food.

Select twelve strong and shrewd women among you for a committee. Let these twelve go into the palace and see the King. You will remain outside, but these twelve must force themselves in, do you hear?"

"Yes, yes!" shrieked the beldames.

"Do not be afraid to do so. Not one of the National Guards, or the King's Guards, will fire on a woman of France, nor offer her a bayonet thrust. Let the committee demand of the King bread and rice. Then eat, and eat, and eat again. One such visit will be enough, I warrant you; and, after that, bread will be distributed every day to the poor of Paris. Now, then, off with you!"

"To Versailles, to Versailles!" shouted the frenzied women, before whose distorted eyes were already visions of eating and drinking to satiation; and with one tremendous surge they turned their faces toward the west, followed by several hundred working men and marauders, who desired to see the "women emeute," as well as to participate in the spoil, if any should be secured.

Mingling in the crowd of women, and tenaciously holding his place near the seditious journalist, was a young man dressed in a porter's blouse and overalls, and wearing the red cap which was the surest passport into such a gathering, and in this case allowed the wearer to pass unquestioned, although he neither sang nor shouted. This man had been an eager listener to everything that Dudevant had uttered. He had followed the latter all the way from the Hotel de Ville, and penetrated the crowd of women after him, determined, as it appeared, to keep his man in sight and hear what he had come there to say. As the throng rushed out of the Place de la Bastille, this person separated from it, after being carried along with the muddy cur-

rent as far as St. Paul's, where he slipped into a heavy portal, mounted a step, and allowed the multitude to pass on. Had any chance acquaintance met him there he would have been easily recognized, in spite of the disguise he wore, by the ugly scar on his left cheek. It was, in fact, D'Artivan, the tool and spy of the Marquis of B——, dogging the tool and spy of Robespierre and Danton.

While D'Artivan stood watching the last of the rabble, some one touched him on the arm. He started and, turning his head hastily, beheld, with some confusion, Dudevant himself standing at his side and laughing maliciously, his hat pulled down over his rat-like eyes, his whole manner triumphant and gleeful.

D'Artivan stared at him with a look of surprise, which did not conceal an expression of dislike also. But for the moment Dudevant was too much engrossed to observe either.

"Saints and devils!" exclaimed he, surveying the porter's dress of the other, without ceasing to laugh. "You have changed your calling, then, and you are now an honest bonnet-rouge. Good! Well, you saw, did you not, how I played the orator just now? What do you think of my little trick? My committee will leave some Paris mud on the palace steps, those fine white marble steps, thirty feet wide, that lead up toward the King's apartments. Oh, they are sweet children, these she-wolves! Couthon was right; only let them see the luxury in which this fat burgher wallows, and they will be ripe for anything."

D'Artivan glowered at the speaker with increasing anger. His mind had been running back to the scene in the café of the Three Virgins, and Dudevant's part in it. Then, he was violently hostile to the ragged populace, which was destroying everything existing and



creating nothing. They had been the instruments of harm to him, since repudiation had begun, not only on the part of the spurious "government," but among the farmers themselves, the tenants of landed proprietors. Moreover, he was wedded in interest to the Marquis of B——, a fierce and uncompromising royalist whom the canaille had ostracized. While he gazed silently and with gathered brows at Dudevant, the latter suddenly glanced at the cicatrice on his face.

"Hullo!" cried he, bursting into another laugh, which was all the more hearty because he was reminded at the moment of D'Artivan's insulting epithets just before the latter received the scar. "And so you still carry Mademoiselle's card, eh?"

D'Artivan reddened furiously; but he did not understand the remark, and glared in silence at the journalist.

"Oho," continued Dudevant; "I see that you have really never been enlightened about your lucky adversary. "Ho, ho, that is droll, upon my soul!" and he fairly doubled his body like a half-closed clasp-knife, in the excess of his mirth.

"Sir," growled D'Artivan, passionately, "what is the matter with you, and what are you talking about?"

"Oh, I am on the point of telling you; only it is so exceedingly funny—however, here goes. Your victor in the duel in which you stopped his sword on your cheek bone so neatly was not Monsieur Aubrey!"

D'Artivan sneered contemptuously. "Well, I am not surprised at that. Probably he had some doubts about the result of the affair, and thought of the false name as a screen. And, in faith, I think it would have been a precaution well taken if I had not thought him too much of a boy to attempt my best with. But I do not see anything funny in this."

"But that is not all. Your antagonist who so neatly carved you was a girl!"

D'Artivan sprang down from the stone steps, his eyes flaming.

"What do you say?" he shouted, paying no attention to the passers-by, several of whom had stopped to listen to this singular colloquy.

"I say," repeated Dudevant, with a very slow enunciation, in order to prolong the effect of the shock, "that your antagonist in the duel was a girl; and that the girl was Mademoiselle Clarise, the fiancée of our mutual acquaintance, Paul Cambray!"

D'Artivan waited to hear no more. With a yell that sounded strangely savage in that crowded thoroughfare he bounded away towards the quay, followed by the laughter and jeers of a score of loiterers who had gathered around the journalist.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

### THE CAVALCADE.

At twelve o'clock noon, on the day of the emeute of the women in the Rue St. Antoine, Sir Philip Belmore, Hubert and Ralph Meltham and Captain Felix Dumesnil, attended by the three valets of the Englishmen, and all finely mounted, entered the middle course of the Grand Avenue leading from Paris to Versailles. The morning was disagreeable; a drizzling rain had been falling for hours, and was now threatening to become a steady down-pour.

One-third of the distance had been covered, and the party was pushing forward at a spirited gait, when they saw before them, and proceeding in the same direction as themselves, a motley throng of people.

"Good heaven, Dumesnil," exclaimed Sir Philip, turning a disturbed look upon the latter; "yonder rabble are on their way to the Palace! Can the miscreants mean to attack it, think you?"

Dumesnil laughed grimly. He knew something of the Parisian temper, of the capricious cruelty of the populace.

"Not this time," returned he; "they are only going to spy out the land and to bully the King, who is no longer able to protect himself. But, *mon Dieu!*" he suddenly roared; "they are women! Come," giving the rein to his horse, "let us forward and see what Paris has vomited on Versailles this morning."

His companions, especially Sir Philip, who was strangely disturbed, needed no urging. The whole cav-

alcade started into a gallop; and in a quarter of an hour they were in the midst of as strange a rabble as ever infested the purlieus of a city.

Following the devilish promptings of the journalist Dudevant, six hundred women, famished and desperate, had actually set out on that dismal morning on their wild and hopeless errand. They were accompanied by several hundred idle men, some fragments of the many thousands who for months had oscillated from one side to the other of Paris, searching for plunder, inciting sedition and urging violence.

From one of these vagabonds, a sooty-faced, ruffianly fellow, Sir Philip learned the forlorn object of their visit. It seemed to him incredible.

"What madness!" exclaimed he, in amazement, as he slowly threaded the stream of savage humanity; "they will get nothing there."

"Morableu! what is that you say?" shouted the ruffian, who had followed close behind him. "They will get nothing, eh?" he growled, angrily; "aha! you must be one of the cursed aristocrats." Then, elevating his voice so that it was plainly heard above the din of the moving mass:

"Hear him, hear this aristocrat!" he vociferated, pointing to Sir Philip, who indeed "looked every inch an aristocrat," as he spurred his horse on through the press.

Instantly a thousand blood-shot and wolfish eyes were on him, a thousand gaunt or brawny arms were stretched toward him, while hundreds of hoarse voices shrieked or vociferated:

"Down with the aristocrat! Down with him!"

Belmore looked quickly about him, and perceived nothing whatever of his party, as he peered forward through the veil of mist which was now beginning to



envelop the heads of the multitude. He had loitered behind his friends, without their observing it; and having no motive in lingering in the midst of the foul-smelling and writhing mass, they had pushed ahead, had cleared the crowd, and left it a hundred paces behind them before they discovered that Sir Philip was not following. Between them and him was now a solid mass of desperate and hostile wretches, who were pressing toward him from flank, front and rear, with savage curses and murderous intent, some armed with forks and knives, others with butcher's cleavers, pikes or staves.

He looked down on them without fear, but even while he looked twenty blackened hands were raised and, clutching their rude weapons, as many ruffians pushed their way fiercely toward him. His bridle-reins were seized, then his stirrups, by the hags who surrounded him, and a huge foundryman, in overalls and blouse, grasped the tail of his horse and attempted to hold the struggling animal back.

The situation of Sir Philip was critical in the extreme, as he instantly comprehended. Cut off from his friends, surrounded by hundreds of human wolves thirsting for his life, horse and driver in the grasp of a score of them, escape seemed an impossibility.

But the eye of Belmore, instead of quailing at the formidable signs that greeted it, flamed fire; his cheek, instead of blanching, glowed redly, for the Saxon blood was surging hotly through them. Rising in his stirrups, and shortening his rein, he shouted as he drew his sword:

"Back! On your lives, back!"

His voice rang out like the notes of a trumpet above the now deafening hubbub, and there was a momentary recoil, as he drew his horse together for a spring. In

that one instant his quick eye had swept the circle of his foes, and in one direction, to the left oblique, he saw they were thinnest and composed entirely of men. The stern look in his face for a moment changed to a look of gratitude; it was no longer necessary to trample down, or to do horrible, nay, shameful, battle with women, and from such a contest his soul revolted, even though these women were unsexed hags, furies who were seeking his life.

Tightening his rein, he gave the spur to his horse, but in the very act of a leap it fell backward.

A pang shot through Belmore's heart. To lose his horse now was to lose his life, to be torn to pieces by those vultures in human shapes. Could it be that some demon had driven a knife into its vitals?

Turning in his saddle, he saw, with a throb of joy, the burly foundryman tugging and dragging at the tail of the horse. There was a crescent of light, as his sword buried itself in the neck of the ruffian, and at the same moment his horse bounded forward.

Fearful cries followed this leap, for the merciless hoofs had hurled down and trampled upon three of the wretches who had tried to seize their prey. But again the spurs were driven into the smoking flanks, and two more frantic leaps of the straining and now thoroughly frightened animal bore down the struggling madmen in front. The yells of agony and fury that rose from their mangled throats were appalling; but, instead of affrighting those who had escaped, the cries of the wounded only increased their rage. They surged forward; a living wall surrounded the horseman, a sea of demoniac faces glared into his, and a forest of arms, with fingers and talons spread like knotted branches, swayed above their uncouth heads.

Sir Philip urged his steed forward; but while it

bravely responded, it forced its way but a foot at a time. The moments were passing, and each moment was bringing to Belmore, nearer and nearer, a horrible death.

Again he rose in his stirrups; again he sent his warning, trumpet-like and stern, to the foes in front of and around him. Then, as he plied the spurs once more, he turned a trifle toward the left, and gave them the sword. Blow after blow, directed with the celerity of lightning, the precision of fate, cut them down, through skull and brisket, mowing a red lane as he advanced.

He had neared the front of the mob; he could see, through the thickening mist, the broad open way beyond for a moment as the breeze lifted the white veil. A few more leaps and he should be out of that living hell.

At the instant he was preparing for the last superhuman effort his ears were pierced by a shriek from his horse, almost human in its agony; it sprang into the air, and fell quivering to the ground in the midst of the howling throng.

One of the miscreants had driven a pike into its bowels.

Sir Philip was thrown forward, but alighted on his feet, still grasping his sword, and without an instant's hesitation he began to use it. Thus far his dauntless courage, his remarkable skill, his wonderful presence of mind, had preserved his life among a thousand perils, that, like living things, had leaped around him; but now, unhorsed, alone, hemmed in by innumerable enemies, whose foul and heated breath suffocated him, what chance had he for life?

One man to a thousand demons!

## CHAPTER XIX.

### THE RESCUERS.

When Sir Philip Belmore stopped in the midst of the mob to question the workman, he was already some paces behind his party. His brothers were conversing with Dumesnil, and these three were riding abreast, as were the three valets close behind them. The anxiety of Sir Philip to ascertain the meaning of this march to Versailles, and which we shall hereafter justify, was not shared by his companions, and they only desired to extricate themselves from the malodorous throng as soon as possible. They had therefore pushed vigorously ahead, being particularly careful not to injure the ragged creatures who were constantly darting in front of or under the legs of their horses. They lost nothing by their prudence; no opposition was offered them, and much to their relief, they were soon clear of the multitude. They had thus far felt no concern for their own safety nor for his, since the rioters had shown no hostility towards them, and they knew nothing of Sir Philip's collision with the workman.

When about one hundred yards in advance of the columns they looked back, and to their surprise saw nothing of Sir Philip. The insurgents at that moment exhibited only a sea of heads, above which the horsemen could perceive—nothing. The rain had changed into a thick and chill mist, which at first had settled on the warm ground, but was now being lifted by the breeze, and wreathing itself around the heads and bodies of the marching columns. Soon nothing could



be seen of these columns but irregular and fantastically outlined shapes that were moving hither and thither in all directions—except that of Versailles. Apparently the masses were pressing toward the center. These singular movements, coupled with the absolute disappearance of Sir Philip, at once excited the alarm of his friends, which was soon increased by terrific yells, curses, groans and shrieks, which now began to issue out of the fog.

As these ominous sounds were now borne forward to them on the wind, Guppy suddenly cried,

“Gen'l'men all! Them wegrants air 'avin' a scrimmage, and my master's in the thick 'o it. H'i'm after 'im!” And with violent objurgations upon his 'orse that wouldn't pick hup its legs, he immediately started toward the scene of the supposed *melée*.

The same impulse had seized the rest of the party; and giving rein to their horses they rapidly galloped back.

As they came nearer, Dumesnil thought he distinguished the voice of Sir Philip above the now horrible din; and, realizing the imminent peril in which the latter was now undoubtedly placed, he struck the spurs into the flanks and bounded at the living barrier that loomed directly in front of him.

“Make way!” roared he, uprearing his colossal form in the saddle, and drawing his enormous sword from its scabbard.

Thus adjured, and astonished by this gigantic apparition, which they could only dimly see rising up through the mist, the barrier gave way, leaving a gap through which the horsemen effected an entrance. But the rent was instantly closed behind them; and, before they realized their terrible position, they looked upon a compact, unbroken sea of upturned faces, livid with fury

they felt the nervous clutch of countless hands, like the arms of the octopus, stretched toward them to drag them from their saddles into the maw of death.

Dumesnil's companions were, like himself, armed with swords; but the valets had only their whips. These implements, however, were in the hands of their skillful and active owners, and were to prove almost as effective as the steel. Made of tough thongs of leather, plaited tightly together, and attached to the wrist by leather loops, these whips were formidable weapons; and the valets showed their disposition to use them, as they raised them above their heads and rode fearlessly into the ranks of the infuriated rioters.

Suddenly, the same bewildering question rose to the minds of the six horsemen—in which direction was Sir Philip? The thick mist had wrapped everything in an impenetrable shroud; and while they dared not remain for an instant in the same spot, they knew not in which portion of the forest of bodies to begin their search.

While they hesitated, a clarion-like voice within twenty feet of them, rose out of the tumult:

“Back, assassins, or you die!”

It was at that instant that Belmore had begun to attack those in front of him, over the body of his fallen horse. Nothing of this could, of course, be seen by his friends, but they comprehended none the less clearly the necessity for quick and desperate action on their own part.

Dumesnil's lion-like voice rose to its full pitch as he shouted:

“Forward! and keep close together.”

Simultaneously, the six rescuers, in close rank, plunged forward into the very arms of the howling wretches who were crowding in front of them to arrest their progress. But Dumesnil, in the weird obscurity

of the mist which enveloped him, appeared like a moving tower; while his horse, a huge and powerful Norman, loomed out of its white shroud like some gigantic and fabled monster. Unmoved by the pandemonium around it, it bore its ponderous rider irresistibly forward, overturning and trampling as it went, the two striking terror every instant into the hearts of those they encountered. Close at his side rode the brothers, and behind them the three valets who were using their terrible whips at every step upon the scowling faces of those who came within their reach. At every step, indeed, a sooty hand was thrust out to grasp their bridles, or, clutching at their limbs, attempting to pull them from their seats. The usually mild blue eyes of Guppy were blazing, but not a sound escaped his lips; only a smile parted them, a smile of intense bitterness. Sir Philip was his idol; and Guppy was picturing to himself, repeatedly, as he rode forward, the horrible possibility of finding that idol, in a few minutes more, battered into an unrecognizable heap, or pierced with forks and pikes, and—dead.

These reflections maddened the honest valet until he scarce resembled himself, and his two companions glanced at him with astonishment. His whip hissed in the air, and cracked like pistol shots in the faces of those who pressed upon him, at every step of his horse.

Men and women were now intermingled in one writhing swarm, surrounding the horsemen and crowding against the flanks of their reeking steeds with reckless determination and mad ferocity. The iron hoofs, the keen sword-blades, the scorpion-like lashes, now every instant descending upon their heads and limbs, were making fearful havoc among them; but instead of abating their fury they augmented it.

Guided by the singular commotion that proceeded

from the spot where Sir Philip fought alone and on foot, his friends continued to force their desperate way; and in a few minutes—which to him and them seemed never-ending—they burst into the cramped arena, where they found him wielding a dripping sword with one hand, and with the other forcing back the assailants, who were fast closing in upon him.

Guppy was the first to reach his side. Uttering a terrific cry the moment he espied his master, a cry of mingled rage and delight, he had lashed his horse into a frenzy, driving it forward through the infernal mass. Crushing, killing, mangling, his frantic steed carried him forward, while he plied his formidable whip with fearful effect. Springing from his saddle, he thrust the bridle-rein over the left arm of his master and shouted:

“Give me your place, Sir Philip, and take mine!”

The tones of Guppy’s voice were joyous; they could not have been more so if he had suddenly found himself in an English forest, face to face with the antlered game his master loved to hunt.

Sir Philip flashed upon his follower a glance which thrilled him. “Well done, my lad!” he panted; and, with extreme difficulty vaulting into the saddle:

“Here,” he called breathlessly; “mount behind me—quick!”

But Guppy was already occupied, and busily so.

“I’ve some vork to do ’ere first, Sir,” responded he, setting about it with both of his exceedingly hard and vigorous fists.

But in spite of this cheerful disposition, the death which until now had threatened the master would assuredly have overtaken the servant, had not Dumesnil been near at hand. While Sir Philip was engaged in an attempt to widen the space around the party, aided by his brothers, a man of muscular frame and the most



brutal aspect forced his way to the spot. It was the ruffian whom Sir Philip had accosted, the direct instigator of the affray. In his blackened hands he carried a rusty pike which he levelled at Guppy, whose back was at that moment turned to him, and lunged forward, shouting hoarsely:

"Down with the slaves of the aristocrats! Oh, we will have bread to eat, or we will have blood to drink, pardieu."

"Drink your own, then scoundrel!" thundered Dumesnil, bringing his sword down upon the ruffian's right shoulder, and literally cleaving him to the heart. With a yell of agony, he tumbled between the forelegs of the Captain's horse, which at the same instant set its huge hoof upon his head, crushing it into hideous shapelessness.

"Sacre," growled Dumesnil, now seizing the pugilist under an arm and lifting him from his feet, "spring up behind me, ass, for your life!"

Guppy, somewhat astonished, and rather cooled by this narrow escape, snatched the pike from his dead enemy, and with surprising agility leaped to the crupper of Dumesnil's saddle, barely escaping a vicious blow from a butcher's cleaver.

The situation of the seven horsemen was now appalling. Hundreds were crowding toward them; every second narrowed the little space in which they kept their weapons incessantly playing. If hemmed in as closely here as Sir Philip had been they were certainly lost; their horses would be as incapable of motion as if encased in iron. They must force themselves out of that seething hell, without pausing for a single instant on the terrible path, blocked though it was with human bodies. To halt would be fatal; to fail was to be torn limb from limb.

Dumesnil's great eyes described a circle. They seemed to devour the whole terrible throng, to pierce the fog which lay like a pall over it. To the left, in the direction of Versailles, it appeared thinnest. The rabble had rushed from that direction at the beginning of the affray, and the impetus had carried them mostly to the right of the spot where Sir Philip had made his stand.

"It is a hole to crawl through," muttered the giant; "Mon Dieu, yes, if it is not compressed too soon."

The horsemen had formed a circle, the flanks of their horses touching; and every moment one of them was obliged to leap forward to force back or cut down an approaching rioter. Horses, riders, all were beginning to feel the effect of such exercise.

"We must get out of this," muttered Sir Phillip, who had received a severe blow in the side, and was evidently in a far worse plight than either he or his friends imagined.

Dumesnil had already decided. He pointed toward the left, where the fog was lifting. Beyond—not more than twenty paces from them—the open road swept on to Versailles.

"Wheel—on my left—into line!" shouted Dumesnil; and with his heavy sword he described a swath around him. The mob recoiled, and left them with a dozen feet of ground.

"Forward, and ride close."

Both these quick commands were as quickly obeyed. In one impervious line they dashed toward the rift, which at that supreme moment seemed to their eager eyes an outlet to Heaven.

Surprise and consternation at this sudden onset held back the few who blocked the way in that direction; and, although the respite was brief, it was enough. Be-

fore the mob could rally, a bloody lane had opened, mowed by the terrible cavalcade as it passed on and out like a whirlwind. Missiles and maledictions followed the horsemen as they sped onward, until they could hear nothing but a sullen hum behind them.

As soon as they slackened their pace attention was given to Sir Philip, whose condition certainly appeared to require it. His clothing hung about him in tatters, and he had lost his hat. He had received numerous and violent kicks about the limbs, a heavy blow in the side, and many severe bruises on his arms. Besides, he was fearfully exhausted; and now that the necessity for extraordinary exertion no longer existed, he drooped in his saddle, and the pallor of his face increased.

Nothing short of his inflexible will could have kept him on his horse during the remainder of that anxious journey. It was fully an hour and a half before they rode up to the royal stables at Versailles. They were a sorry looking party, and they preferred not to present themselves at the Palace in such a plight. But as they passed the esplanade in front of the gates, Sir Philip was recognized by an officer who was watching the manoeuvres of a company of guards in the Royal Square. The officer immediately detected, and evidently guessed the cause of, the disordered appearance of the party. He hurried after them at once; and so warmly did he press upon them the temporary use of his apartments, which were within a short distance of the Chateau, that Sir Philip gratefully accepted his hospitality. An equerry took charge of the horses, and the valets were carried off by some of the servants at the stables to their own quarters, and there left to themselves.

After these dispositions, Sir Philip, accompanied by his tired companions, and almost sinking under fatigue,

as well as acute physical pain, entered the officer's apartments. Here the court physician came to him, sent, he said, by Mademoiselle Sainte Maur, with the consent of the Queen, and with instructions not to permit him to appear out of his chamber until he had received proper treatment and obtained rest. Grateful for this unlooked-for attention, Sir Philip still refused to be "coddled," as he termed it, until he learned that the approach of the Amazons was already known, and that no danger to the inmates of the Chateau was possible. Then he lay down, not to sleep, but to listen to the coming of the mob.

He had not long to wait.



## CHAPTER XX.

### MARIE ANTOINETTE.

Marie Antoinette, amiable, if frivolous; beautiful and imprudent; intelligent, graceful, affectionate; of noble blood and bearing, was the invited guest of France. France, styling itself the most chivalrous nation in Europe, despising the simplicity of her nature, persecuted her, then insulted her, and finally murdered her.

This unfortunate Queen had come to the artificial Court of France a warm-hearted girl, with an innocent disposition to avoid the strained and hypocritical usages she found there, and with a precocious desire to reform the Court itself. At once ingenuous and imprudent, she was not long in committing errors of judgment which were eagerly seized upon by the malignants who surrounded her, as weapons with which to destroy her.

She saw so much that was stilted and ridiculous in the manners of the ladies whose duties kept them near her, that, until she became accustomed to the spectacle, it excited in her the most intense amusement, which she unguardedly permitted the grotesque performers to see. She encouraged the younger and fresher spirits among them to abandon many absurd traditions in habits and dress; but the older dames resented these little innovations as insults, and they began a system of repression that soon grew to persecution. They set themselves to work, as only women can, to make her unpopular with the "people" (at that period bigoted, ignorant and vicious,) and they were marvelously successful. Every frivolous act, every harmless speech, was purposely

misrepresented or misconstrued, by the volatile but envious parasites of the Court. In short, it was not long ere the inconstant populace which had welcomed her with groveling adulation and idiotic joy, began to pelt her with epithets, and ended in gratifying their insensate hate in her deliberate assassination.

The lofty position occupied by the Queen kept her aloof from ordinary sympathy—which every woman, no matter what her degree, requires—and isolated her from all companionship, except that which she sought in defiance of the pretended restrictions which her wigged and painted advisers constantly cited to her. With the exception of the Princess Lambelle (who subsequently lost her own life in consequence of her devotion to her royal mistress) and one or two others of rank sufficient to justify her in having them near her, she counted but few, indeed, in whom she could repose confidence, or with whom she could even informally converse without being subjected to the impudent espionage and sneers of the paupers who swarmed about the Court.

Among the few friends that were left to her at this eventful time was Helene Sainte Maur. The wealth, beauty, mental gifts and patrician birth of our heroine had kept the doors of the noblesse open to her, even after they were closed to the noblest of those who were of different political faith or purpose. The Queen, therefore, had many opportunities to become familiar with Helene's character; and the great contrast which she observed between this beautiful woman's moral nature and that of the women with whom she mingled in the society of the Court drew the sovereign to the subject, until a mutual attachment resulted; an attachment as remarkable as it proved imperishable.

About a fortnight previous to the descent of the Amazons upon Versailles, the Queen had extended an

invitation to Helene to spend a few weeks at the palace, and Helene was still there.

The visit of Sir Philip Belmore to Versailles at this time was on Helene's account particularly, although he had often been a guest there before, and was on friendly terms with Servan, then Governor of the Pages, and the most powerful personage at the chateau, and also with several others of the King's household. It was Helene's presence in the palace, therefore, which had caused him so much concern when he encountered the rabble and learned the purpose of their descent upon the palace. After that encounter and his escape he had felt doubly anxious to see her; and if danger threatened her to share it with her, if he could not avert it. Besides, he had determined to plead with her, as he had plead with her before, to leave Paris, to leave France. He was anxious, as were his brothers, and as was Dumesnil, to depart from scenes that were daily assuming a more alarming aspect; and if he could induce Helene to forego her desire to remain near the Queen, and remove for awhile to England, his heart, he felt, would be lighter than it had ever been.

Upon communicating with the surgeon, whom Helene had sent to him with the Queen's permission, as soon as she had learned of his arrival and condition, he had received assurances, as we have seen, that the mob was expected at the chateau, that no danger had been anticipated, and that all necessary precautions to prevent any had already been taken. It was only another attempt, said the officer who had kindly placed his rooms at Sir Philip's service, to force impossible concessions from the King, another method of the revolutionists to annoy the royal family. Hardly satisfied, from what he saw, that all this was true, he had reluctantly yielded to the advice of the physician and the urgent entreaties of his brothers, and had retired to

a couch, after sending a message to Helene that she should at once apprise him if she needed him, and exacting a promise from his three companions that they would not leave the palace during the remainder of the day.

Within an hour after these preliminaries, the mob arrived. The van was composed entirely of women, hideous, unkempt, haggard and fierce. At their head marched twelve forlorn and famished creatures, led by a red-faced and bulky woman, a butcher's wife, selected for her brawn and boldness to lead this forlorn hope. In the rear, straggling along in two meandering lines, came several hundred boys and men, the refuse of the sewer-hiding class, who halted near the esplanade, where they gathered in groups to watch the movements of the women, and encourage them with their cries and invectives.

In the royal square the band of termagants came to a halt. They were no longer vociferating, their hoarse or shrill voices were subdued to a murmur. Then an internal agitation of the mass, and out of its midst stalked the thirteen—the "committee" and its leader.

It may be said in parenthesis here that Louis XVI. was no longer master at Versailles any more than he was at Paris; otherwise, the disgraceful and humiliating scenes that now transpired, and which were the mere precursors of worse to follow, could never have occurred.

The iron palisades gaped before the invaders, offering an easy entrance, and no one was there to oppose them. They passed on to the outer court, into the second, now mounting the five steps that led to the third, then up the broad marble staircase they clambered, still unopposed, four abreast. At the landing they turned toward the King's apartments, directed thither by a National Guard.

The Guard was slinking away, when, repenting, per-



haps, of his own brutal perfidy, he turned and faced the "committee."

"What is it you want here, my friends?" asked he, in a mild voice.

The butcher's wife turned upon him:

"What is it we want, eh?" screamed she, clawing the air with her red fingers; "come, listen to this pretty fellow, this flaneur who wears fine livery in the barracks as well as on the boulevarts! Do you see him? I warrant you, now, he sups every Saturday night with Chopine."

Then, inflamed by these tantalizing reflections, (for by "Chopine" she meant a female tippler, and she herself was a lover of the bottle) she approached the disconcerted soldier with arms akimbo, and vociferated in his face:

"Peste, idiot! Do you think we would be out in the rain, three leagues from an umbrella, if we had our dinner in the cellar at home, or something better than rainwater for soup and paving-stones for bread? You crab! You—you are lisse; you do not eat here—you devour; your teeth you do not use at all, and you do not know truffles from meat. How many bottles of red Frontinac have warmed your brains since yesterday, tell me that?"

"Vache!" exclaimed the soldier, in a heat at this tirade.

"What?" screamed the termagant, darting her fist at his face; "you call me a cow, do you—you ass! Ah, toad, let me hear you croak!" And before the unlucky meddler could slip away, she had grasped him by the throat, while the twelve closed in around him, uttering encouraging cries.

"Now, let us hear you sing. We want the King, and you tell us to go through that gallery and through a hall, and so on. Look here, we are not fools; we do not

intend to be trapped like rats. We are in a hurry. We have left our brats at home gnawing their thumbs, do you hear?"

"Bread—bread and rice!" wailed the "committee," huddling around the leader. "Dame!" growled the soldier, who had succeeded in freeing his throat from the lusty virago's by no means gentle hands; "the King does not keep a baker's shop."

"But he has the keys to them," retorted the woman; and she stretched forth her hands to clutch the epaulette of the guardsman. But he had already edged himself out of the group, and with a shrug of disgust he incontinently retreated, leaving the women to themselves.

Thus encouraged, they rushed into the "Hall of Guards," tearing at the uniforms of the few *gens d'armes* there; then into the King's public dining-room; then on into the very bed chamber.

And here their rage found the very fuel that Dudevant's devilish intention had provided for it.

The great crimson velvet bed (upon which Louis the Grand had reposed), with its rich embroidered damask, stood behind the gilded balustrade where bishops had leaned over expiring royalty, in a sumptuous alcove, sacred to majesty. The sight of its stately magnificence awed the invaders, but it frenzied them also. Never had they been where royalty lodged till now, never till now had they dreamed how royalty slept. It was a revelation, and their rude minds, still bound by superstition which held them back from profaning these inner precincts of royalty, flew to their own beds of straw rotting in mouldy cellars, and they gnashed their teeth as they looked.

But royalty's self was not there; and they scurried like rats into the great gallery, the *Œil de Bœuf*, the

"Bull's Eye," that stateliest of halls, and there they found him, this poor hunted King, cornered at last.

Royalty expected this unceremonious visit, and royalty was urbane and gracious, in its miserable impotency. Promises were offered in lieu of bread and rice and meat; and, as these are easy enough to carry, the twelve petitioners started briskly to return to their constituents without. But the butcher's wife was not to be thus cajoled. She stopped her too-confiding sisters with a gesture of command, which they passively obeyed, the hopeless expression which had a moment before left their wan faces returning again to them. They were so used to disappointments, these miserable creatures, who had fulfilled too well that duty which afterwards the great Bonaparte said was imperatively theirs—to bear children; and now they had nothing wherewith to feed their offspring—those voluntary offerings to France, who was always calling for soldiers to keep alive its precarious glory.

In silence these women waited, while the butcher's wife, who had meat to eat, and was therefore more vigorous than they, turned upon the King her flaming eyes, and, all unabashed by majesty, shrilled her protest:

"Sacre bleu! And do you think to feed us on nothing better than that? We shall have bread, forsooth, the charettes shall stop carrying aristocrats to the guillotine, and their carrion from it, and shall load up with bread and rice and meat, eh? To-morrow, do you say? Oh, yes, to-morrow, that is the word. Ho, ho, do you hear that, my children? Well, it is four good leagues to Paris, and four more back to Versailles. That makes eight, does it not? Enough, is it not, to wear our legs to the stumps? And while we are tramping about, par-ci and par-la, and our young ones are eating mud, you will fill the bellies of your cannon with round bis-

cuit, and feed them to us across the Square out yonder when we come back here. No, no, a million times no, I tell you! We are tired, we are hungry, we want bread to-day, to-day, do you understand?"

"Bread, bread, bread," chorused the twelve, in woful concert. Then they began stamping their muddy feet on the marble pavement. Hunger has reverence for nothing, do you see?

The King was distressed. He looked around him, as if seeking some one to whom he might refer this insolent but formidable subject, who thus braved him in his own palace.

Such an one was near at hand.

At the farther end of the gallery, listening, with glowing cheeks and flashing eyes, to this humiliating dialogue, stood the Queen and Helene Sainte Maur. As the woman ended her speech, the sad eyes of the King were turned toward his indignant consort, as she stood immovable, except for the glancing of her eye as it flitted from one to the other of the half dozen sullen gens d'arms who had been sent into the gallery.

Suddenly, and without a word to the Queen, Helene left her side and advanced toward the leader of the women. Beckoning the latter imperiously toward a window opening on the long balcony, Helene stepped out upon it, and a moment after the woman followed her.

Several minutes elapsed, and the two had not returned. The twelve grew restless, and whispered together. Was that majestic woman who had taken their leader away the Queen? Ah, she appeared more like a goddess, a celestial or a saint. She had given a mute sign of command to the butcher's wife, who feared nothing, but who had looked startled and confused, and had obeyed without a question. They were becoming



uneasy. What was going to happen? What were they to do without their chief?

They had begun to raise their voices, they had started toward the balcony windows, when the two women, who belonged at the two extreme ends of the social world, came in from the portico together. The one calm and majestic and silent; the other disturbed, embarrassed, and respectful.

Without looking to right or left, the butcher's wife made a sign to the twelve to follow her, and in silence they crept out of the gallery.

## CHAPTER XXI.

### MIRABEAU.

The surprise of the King, and the gratitude of the Queen, when Helène composedly returned to the latter's side, were profound and affecting. They did not ask her how she had so mysteriously but summarily relieved them of the marauding women; they only pressed her hands in silence, and then they separated.

They did not know that another rabble was on its way to Versailles, that it would soon be swarming over the vast grounds of the royal seat, waiting for night to settle down ere they came to squat at the gates of the palace, to inundate the hall of the assembly itself. Ah, if they had known!

While the chateau was being invaded by the delegation of fish-women, Mirabeau was at Versailles, dining with Servan, in the latter's apartments in the Petites Ecuries. Servan was hostile to the Court party, although in the King's household; while Mirabeau was the friend of the Queen, and of the Monarchy. From the windows of the chateau, opening on the Royal Square, Mirabeau stood watching the approach of the mob. He had heard nothing of the movement previous to his arrival; and his business at Versailles was with Servan, whom he employed often in the capacity of a literary assistant. The noise had drawn him to the windows, at the moment that a page from the Queen brought him a sealed billet. Excusing himself, he

stepped into an ante-room and opened the message. It was from Helene Sainte Maur, and read:

"The coming of the mob was anticipated. The Flanders Regiment and the National Guards have been ordered outside of the palace grounds; the cavalry and infantry of the King's Guards are deploying in the court yard and the smaller courts. No alarm is felt.

"I have information that the Jacobins are sending another rabble; it will be here this evening. It is all because of the banquet given on the 1st. to the officers of the new (Flanders) regiment, by the officers of the King's Bodyguards. I counselled against that affair, but it was simply following a precedent, and the authors of it insisted on giving the entertainment. It has insulted the Jacobins, however, and there is excitement in Paris, as you are well aware. You must go at once to the Menus Plaisirs, and use your power to calm the storm that is rising there in the Assembly. If the rabble comes into collision with the Court and the Bodyguards, the result will be calamitous. Go, my friend; there is little time, and it is precious."

With Mirabeau, Helene's influence was supreme; besides, he was deeply distressed at the news, some of which had already reached him before her letter had been delivered to him. He hurried to the Assembly.

When he entered the hall, his ears were greeted with the sounds of babel. Uncouth sounds, issuing out of the hoarse throats of boissardes, market porters, tramps from the fields and outer boulevards, butchers and workmen from St. Antoine and St. Marceau.

When the "committee" left the palace, they went off in the direction of the Menus Plaisirs. They were all empty-handed, except the butchers' wife, whose red fingers clutched a scrap of paper which she protected

from the rain by muffling it in her greasy and faded shawl.

Mirabeau, when he entered the hall, saw nothing to excite his immediate alarm, and went to his place, from which he began to harangue the Assembly. The galleries were crowded with the Paris mob of women. They sent a wail down into the ears of the destroying angels who sat below them:

“Bread! Bread!”

It was a doleful cry; it was a supplication and a threat. The Assembly stirred uneasily. A gray-haired assassin turned in his seat, and whispered to his colleague:

“We must remove more Aristocrats.”

In the murderers’ dialect of the Assembly, to “remove” was to guillotine.

Mirabeau pauses in his peroration, shakes his mane, raises his sentor’s voice to a roar, and promises his sisters—everything. The dripping women become clacquers, this “little mother Mirabeau,” is such a favorite now with the people. But hunger, that crime-breeder, is at their vitals again; and Mirabeau is a second time interrupted, and more sharply this time, because it is Famine which speaks:

“Bread, bread, and less talk!”

This was practical, this was prosaic; but, as the Assembly dealt only in metaphor—and heads, it wisely adjourned.

At the outer entrance stood the butcher’s wife; and, as Mirabeau passed out, his bloodshot eyes staring at the western sun, whose rays at that moment were breaking through the clouds and gilding the front of the house of blood and the house of God with the same benign ray, the woman held out the scrap of paper. Mirabeau read it, and his face became illumined. He



whispered a word into the frowsy ear of the woman and hastened away; while she, still retaining the slip of paper, returned with a look of triumph to the galleries where her companions waited.

Then these women proceeded to hold a convention. It was a conclave of the Furies. The butcher's wife pounced upon the president's chair; and, as she settled herself in it with a grotesque dignity, she shouted to the conclave:

"Order, my children!"

It was the first and the last time in her meagre life that she was too feel the luxury of power; but she had little time to enjoy it. She had said to her tatterdemalion convention, when they began to grow boisterous—like the Assembly:

"Wait, and you will see."

And the "convention" had come to order, and could have taught the Assembly a lesson in decorum.

An hour passed; so did sundry resolutions, clothed in language never heard in that hall before or after. At the end of an hour Mirabeau re-appeared. Again he whispered in the ear of the leader, and this time he gave her some slips of paper; after which he went away, smiling.

The butcher's wife abandoned the magisterial curule, and hurried out of the hall. When she reached the door, however, she stopped, turned back, and with the air and voice of a mother to her brood, said:

"Do not stir! I will return."

The slips which she carried away were orders on the bakers, the grocers, the butchers. Mirabeau had told her where to present them, when he took from her the paper she brought from the palace.

At the end of half an hour the curiosity of the women had become almost unbearable; but they did not stir.

At the end of an hour their leader returned, and found them sitting where she had left them.

Then, dry groceries took the place of debate, provisions the place of proclamations. Thus had the munificence of Helene Sainte Maur found its way to the objects of her pity, through the heart of Mirabeau.

The provisions are brought in those tumbrils which have so recently carried different fruit—the fruit of the Revolution, and which will carry it again to-morrow. But hunger is not fastidious; it is the one thing that is without sentiment.

The six hundred are fed, and they tramp back to Paris. On the way there they will meet another swarm with faces set toward Versailles, who will not be so easily appeased.

The butcher's consort went home with honors; she was now a leader in the dingy faubourg; and because of this, Dudevant's stratagem was to prove his ruin.

She did not forget the fair-haired woman of the palace, nor the giant leader of the Assembly. Hour after hour she gossiped in her husband's shop, of the angel with the golden hair—like crinkled sunshine—and with a blow of the cleaver on the meat-block would exclaim:

“Phew! There is but one woman and but one man in all Paris! As for the rest—l'enfer! A French invitation to migrate to sheol.”

One afternoon a stranger came into the shop. He approached her, and, regarding her attentively for a moment, asked:

‘Are you Madame Cartouche?’

“And who is, if I am not?” retorted the woman, eyeing him with evident disfavor. Then, as he did

not immediately answer this dubious question, she added:

"You do not wish to buy sausages, do you? Bah, I am a fool; you belong to the aristocrats. Well, and what do you want with the shop, eh? What do you want with Mother Cartouche? Tell me that."

"I propose to do so," returned the stranger, taking no notice of her raillery. "I have something to say to you privately; something that you will be very much interested to know. Can you take me to a room where we will be alone?"

"Oh," cried the beldame, bursting into a laugh, "I am not afraid to be in a room with you alone; and, as for Cartouche—well, I manage Cartouche. Come."

Leading the way into a small sitting-room behind the shop, she pointed to a seat, and, taking one herself, folded her red arms and waited for him to begin.

"Bah! he is ugly," she said to herself; and aloud: "Well, can you speak now?"

"You know a certain journalist by the name of Achille Dudevant?" suggested the stranger, as though confident of her reply.

Mother Cartouche, however, eyed him suspiciously.

"And if I should happen to know such a person?" she demanded.

"Well, you do know him," returned her visitor; "but you do not know that you ought to hate him."

"And why should I hate him—he is a good republican and hates the aristocrats? And do you know why? I will tell you. One of your fine marquises ran away with his sweetheart and did not marry her; and when Dudevant exposed him to his friends, and the little lawyer Robespierre went to him and demanded that he should do something to smooth matters, this fine nobleman kicked the lawyer, and afterwards had Dudevant

imprisoned for a month. Oh, that was before the times changed, mind you. And I tell you that little Robespierre did not forget that kick, either, and he was not long about turning the Marquis out of France, after the Assembly commenced to rule. So, you see, I know all about this poor Dudevant."

Mother Cartouche's volubility had carried her entirely away from the object of the interview; and it would be impossible to say how long she would have continued in this strain had not the stranger interrupted her.

"Oh," said he, "I have heard all that, and much more of the same kind. But what I wish to hear now is this—whether or not you have any reason to protect this man Dudevant if he is arrested for a crime?"

"Peste," cried the woman, "if you can not speak out, go away."

"Very well; I will tell you that this Achille Dudevant one year ago perpetrated a terrible wrong upon a certain relative of yours who was a servant of that very Marquis whom you were talking about."

Mother Cartouche was stirred; she began to feel uneasy misgivings. There was in the stranger's manner, as well as in his words, an ominous preparation.

"What do you mean?" she asked, all the asperity gone from her voice, which was husky now.

"Your brother's name was Jean Beauchamp, and one year ago he was the trusted and confidential servant of the Marquis of B——."

"That is true," murmured the woman, in a voice hardly audible. "Well, go on."

"It was Jean who attended to the Marquis' little arrangements in his love affairs. Dudevant found out that it was Jean who abducted the girl he was in love with, for the benefit of the Marquis, and he swore he



would persecute the Marquis to the death, if he could; and that Jean himself should die."

Mother Cartouche had risen from her chair, and now stood leaning over the visitor who had come to impart to her such fearful information, as though her vengeance was about to fall upon him for unfolding it. But when he paused an instant, she hissed out between her shut teeth:

"Curse it, go on, I tell you!"

"Three months afterward, your brother was executed for the murder of a workman in the factory of the brothers Thierry, Rue St. Antoine."

"Scelerat!" shouted the woman, shaking her clenched fist over the speaker, while her small eyes emitted sparks of fire, "is it this that you have come to tell me? Yes, my brother was executed, but he was innocent."

"I believe it," assented her visitor with a peculiar smile; "but do you know who caused his conviction?"

"What! if I did, do you think he would be alive? Do you know him?"

"Yes. Read that."

He thrust a folded paper in her hand; and rising, stood and watched her, as if he expected a terrible outburst. It soon came. Tearing open the paper, she read it slowly aloud, word for word:

"This is to certify that on, etc., a sworn statement was filed in the office of the Prefect of the Seine, on, etc., by one Achille Dudevant, a journalist by profession, charging one Jean Beuchamp, residing in the Rue St. Martin, at, etc., with having killed without justification, in the presence of that affiant, a workman in the employ, etc., by the name of Jacques Ledue, etc. That upon the filing of said statement said Beuchamp was

arrested; afterwards tried, convicted, and on, etc., executed. That the only evidence not circumstantial was that of said Dudevant."

This affidavit was duly signed and sworn to by a sergeant de ville.

We can not describe the appearance of the butcher's wife when she had finished reading this document. It was that of a hyena robbed of its prey. For some minutes she indulged in the most frightful oaths; but the spirit of vengeance was fully aroused in her vindictive breast, as the man before her had intended it should be, and it was not to be appeased by mere ebullitions of fury. She soon succeeded in calming herself, and in a changed tone demanded to know how best she could mete out to her brother's "murderer" the full measurement of the punishment he deserved.

"You wish him to die, do you not?" suggested the unknown.

"Sacre, yes, he must die!" was the savage answer.

"Very well. You know that this man is a paid tool of Robespierre, who would not willingly allow him to be arrested or punished. Still, Robespierre has a deadly fear of the mob, of the sans culottes. You will, therefore, take this paper, which is proof against Dudevant of—no matter what; and you will have the petition at the end of the accusation signed by as many of the people as you can find to do so. You will have it here to deliver to me at this hour on the day after to-morrow. Then you will go with me to the National Assembly, and there we will see Danton. Do you understand?"

"Sacre, yes, give it me."

Mother Cartouche snatched the roll out of his hands with ferocious eagerness; and the stranger without further speech, walked briskly out of the shop.

This man was D'Artivan. The Marquis of B——  
had set him upon the track of more than one of his  
enemies. Robespierre was one; and as he could not  
yet reach Robespierre, he had begun with the underling  
Dudevant who had really set Robespierre upon him.



## CHAPTER XXII.

### BIVOUACKED IN THE ROYAL STABLES.

We left Sir Philip Belmore nursing his bruises in an apartment of the officer of the King's Guard, and straining an anxious ear in the direction of the Royal Square. At the first sounds admonishing him of the approach of the mob, he rose stiffly from his uneasy couch and went to the window, which overlooked the avenue leading into the square from the City. At the left of the building in which he was lodged were the palatial stables of the palace, one wing of which was occupied entirely by the men employed there, as lodgings.

Belmore's first thoughts, as he beheld the rabble pouring into the esplanade, reverted to Helene. Where was she? In what part of the palace? Was she in the old palace or the new? If in the new, she would be certain to come in contact with the miserable horde, and share whatever abuse they had in store for the royal family. As if to answer his thoughts and confirm his fears, a page at that moment brought him a note from Helene.

Belmore's paleness disappeared as he glanced at the elegant superscription on the perfumed envelope which was a part of the vellum itself, and bore her coat of arms—a mailed, gauntleted hand with the index finger pointing upward. The letter was as follows:

“I thank you for your solicitude. There is no danger of a personal attack upon any one here, unless it should be invited by some imprudent person, and that folly is not anticipated. You need not



distress yourself, therefore, on my account; though again I thank you.

"I am told that you had a terrible struggle with this same mob, whom you passed on your way hither. You are also injured, although not at all seriously, the physician tells me; and for this also I am thankful. I am assured that you are receiving proper care and attention. You need rest for a few hours, at least.

"And now, I intend to lay my serious commands upon you, and you will not disregard them, I am sure.

"On no account must you or either of your party leave your apartments while those wretched creatures are here. I warn you that if you or either of the others who were engaged in that difficulty are seen by the mob, it can not fail, as you must know, to provoke an outbreak of the most violent character. The consequences could hardly be foreseen. You had better keep together; and it would be prudent, also, to retire to a place that is not likely to be visited by the rabble. The most retired part of the stables would be the safest from their observation, and at the same time the most comfortable, since it is fitted up especially for lodging and dining room. In the latter there will be room for all of your party; and I will send a servant to conduct you there immediately, if you assent.

"After the mob shall have left the town I will send a messenger to you, informing you where you can then find me. In the meantime, I shall, of course, remain with the Queen."

"Tell Mademoiselle Sainte Maur that I will do exactly as she directs," said Belmore, turning to the waiting page. Then he re-perused the letter, feasting his eyes upon the script which had come to him with the scent of violets, traced by the fairest hand in all France. Returning it to its folds, he placed it in the pocket of his robe, and stood moodily gazing out of the window at the coming multitude. Along the broad avenue they came, tramping in disorderly lines, hooting, shrieking, cursing, gesticulating, a veritable procession of the Demonai vomited out of hell.

There was a summons at his door, and as he turned towards it his brothers and Dumesnil followed by a servant, entered.

Dumesnil hurriedly accosted him :

"Mademoiselle has sent word to us," said he, anxiously regarding the approaching throng through the window, "that you required us instantly. What is amiss?"

Sir Philip, understanding at once the meaning of the peremptory message, pointed toward the rabble, and handed Dumesnil the letter, which he read hurriedly.

"You see there is no time to spare," observed Sir Philip.

"Mon Dieu, no," Dumesnil answered; then he added,

"On my soul, that woman is superb. Here were we, four of us, and men at that, getting our swords sharpened, as one might say, to take a hand in the fight we expected would re-commence here. Asses! Yes, we were asses, voila: Well, let us acknowledge Mademoiselle our Captain, after that. And—million thunders! We have not one minute to lose, for the devils are inside the gates."

The servant who had entered behind them now informed them that he had been sent to conduct them to the retreat selected for them.

"Come, then, gentlemen," said Sir Philip, quickly resuming his coat; and leading the way out of the suite in which he had been so comfortably domiciled, the servant was directed to take them at once to their rendezvous.

The three valets were overjoyed at the appearance of their respective masters. Guppy's satisfaction was extreme; his red lips were parted with an ineffably sweet expression, his blue eyes were dancing like fire-flies, as he hovered about Sir Philip. In his exuberance of spirits he could not refrain from an occasional remark.

"Mr. Trotter, sir," he whispered to that individual, who was busy in arranging comfortable seats, bringing

flagons of water, and providing sundry other comforts; "Mr. Trotter, you 'ave not taken your name in wain, sir."

"Ah—'ow's that, Mr. Guppy?" murmured Trotter, dusting a deal bench with an enormous red cotton 'kerchief.

"Why," explained Jeems, graciously, "you're a perambulator of the first quality, that's wot you h'are."

Meanwhile, the distant sounds of commotion from the Square reached our party, but faintly, and it seemed as if they were to escape the notice of the marauders. But in this they were partially disappointed. While the "committee" of women were holding their strange audience with the King, some twelve or fifteen of the ruffians who had accompanied them from Paris were prowling around the stablemen's quarters. Led on by the hope of finding something to purloin, they entered the long corridor or passage, on one side of which was situated the room in which Sir Philip and his party were gathered. The end of this corridor was a blank wall; but extending across it was a transverse passage some fifteen or twenty feet deep, on either side, at the respective ends, of which were two very high and narrow windows, that were there only for the purpose of giving light and ventilation. There was, therefore, absolutely no outlet from the corridor except the front entrance. The transverse passage thus formed a cul de sac.

The door opening from the corridor into the room occupied by the visitors, as well as the outer door was unbolted, and as the last of the stragglers entered the corridor he pushed it open a few inches and stared into the apartment.

Only one of the inmates observed him, his movements having been too quiet and stealthy to have disturbed any one. But Guppy's quick eyes, alert as

usual, had caught a glimpse of the man's face as it was thrust through the opening, and although it was hastily withdrawn, the valet recognized it as that of one of the miscreants who had attacked him when he went to his master's aid, and whom he had knocked down. Saying nothing to the rest, he walked briskly to the door and passing through it closed it noiselessly after him. The man's glance, as he peered into the room, had rested upon Sir Philip's face with a startled look, and it was evident that it had been recognized and that in a few minutes the whole gang of marauders would swarm in upon the little party and annihilate it, unless something were done, and that speedily, to prevent an alarm being given them.

Guppy was the author of a very sensible precept, which he also followed: "Wothever you do, let your 'ead, 'ands, hand 'eels work all at once, h'and together."

The moment of all others to demonstrate the wisdom of this advice was certainly at hand, and Guppy knew it. As he passed into the corridor the last of the marauders—the man who had looked into the room—was disappearing at the end of the corridor into the transverse passage, from which a chorus of hoarse voices proceeded. Evidently, thought Guppy, there are a lot of the vagabonds in there, and this one is going to tell them of his discovery, hoping to mass them in front of the door of the room which they could then very easily convert into a slaughter pen, since there was but one means of egress, and it would be the work of a minute or two to summon the whole rabble to assist in butchering the victims.

Guppy's resolution was instantly taken. He slipped quietly back to his companions, and, motioning them to listen and observe silence, told them in a few words all



that he had seen, and suggested what should be done. He had noticed the blind passage when he first came into the building, and his hope was that the ruffians themselves might be trapped.

After a rapid consultation Sir Philip said:

"My friends, there must be no mistake of judgment in what we undertake to do; and there must be perfect concert of movement. This is our plan: When we issue into the corridor, Guppy will spring to the outer door and bolt it, so as to prevent the entrance of any one from the outside. Then we will rush in a body, with drawn swords and whips, to the rear of the corridor, thus closing the mouth of the cross-way, and holding the gang in a cul de sac. If they attempt to force their passage out we must cut them down; but if they do not, and offer to give no alarm, we will hold them there until the body of the mob has left Versailles."

This plan was rapidly rehearsed while the party were preparing for the attack; and Guppy, meantime, having found several forks in the tool chest of the closet opening into the apartment, the seven men, armed with swords and forks, dashed out of the room, three abreast (Guppy having darted to the front entrance to secure it), and rushed toward the blind passage.

Meantime, as if to favor this precarious plan, the spy had gathered his companions in one end of the cul de sac, where in excited whispers he had told them of his discovery. He was proceeding to offer his leadership in securing or massacring the strangers, when there came a rush of feet, and, as they turned in dismay—a wall had risen up across the mouth of the corridor, bristling with weapons, blazing with eyes. Before a hand was raised, a voice which caused them to tremble broke upon them like thunder in a cavern:

"Silence among you! If you speak, if you move, we will fall upon you and cut you to pieces?"

The gang neither spoke nor moved for the space of a minute; they were amazed, they were terrorized. And certainly they had nothing to hope for, should they attempt an assault and fail. Those stern faces looking down on them as they sat huddled there at the end of the treacherous passage gave them only the promise of death, even if they confined themselves to shouting an alarm to their distant confederates.

But there was one man among them who was about to earn the name of madman. He was a vigorous fellow, about the size and weight of Guppy, of muscular appearance and build, with fiery hair and beard, and with wildly glancing eyes of a pale gray.

Rising from the midst of his companions, as he muttered an imprecation, he deliberately advanced toward the mouth of the trap. When within a few feet of the menacing weapons, he turned his head backward, and shouted:

"Come on, let us tear the hearts out of the dogs!"

This bold movement and speech had upon the others the effect of an electric shock. They scrambled to their feet, braced themselves for a rush, and several of them displayed knives, which they brandished fiercely, glowering threateningly as they began to creep forward.

The two parties that now confronted each other, although utterly dissimilar in character and appearance, as well as purpose, were in equal peril. An outcry by the one, if heard by the insurgents in the esplanade yonder, would bring certain destruction to the other. But such an outcry, or an attack by the gang, penned as they were in the narrow passage, and with no weapons but their short knives, would surely end in the slaughter of

most of them before their accomplices could come to their rescue.

Equally imbued with this terrible knowledge, both parties hesitated, the one to press in upon the gang, the other to attack and to raise the alarm.

The self-appointed leader grew impatient; his pale eyes rolled with an insane frenzy.

"Come, cowards!" cried he, hoarse from excitement and rage; "let us beat down these enemies of the people, and deliver them to the women!"

The band, fifteen in number, gathered themselves for a rush. The next instant they would have hurled themselves upon their besiegers; but before any one could divine his intention, Dumesnil pushed his way through the cordon, and with two strides was at the side of the leader of the rioters. Then the latter, looking upward in amazement at the gigantic figure towering over him, felt himself lifted as the hurricane would lift a sapling; his breast was crushed against that of his assailant, till there was not breath enough left in it for a cry; then he was shot out from the mighty arms as though from a catapult, and headlong into the midst of the group he had fired by his bravado. The force with which he was hurled was fearful, as, indeed, were the consequences. Every portion of his own body seemed to strike the body of another of the appalled wretches who stood huddled at the end of the way; and while those who were thus struck fell stunned or crippled, the hapless leader himself dropped upon the pavement, a shapeless, broken mass.

It was not any longer necessary to threaten death to the cowering band in the cul de sac. Except for a groan or a stifled cry at intervals from those who were injured, no sound but their labored breathing was now heard.

To those who held them prisoners, and who stood

there on guard over them, the moments were hours. To their listening ears came the distant and confused sounds made by the mob as they hovered about the palace gates; but these sounds gave no report of what was transpiring in the chateau itself. There was no means of knowing how soon the mob would leave, or whether it might not visit the stables themselves.

At last, however, there was absolute silence without, and Guppy was sent to reconnoiter. He returned in the course of a quarter of an hour with the gratifying news that the mob had retired without attempting any mischief, and that there was no longer any necessity for concealment. A sort of court-martial was then held, and finally it was decided that the prisoners should be allowed to go out of the town. They were accordingly set free, and went forth without an escort, in silence, and with scowls which they did not attempt to conceal.

On returning to the palace, Sir Philip found a billet awaiting him from Helene. It briefly read :

“Come to the *Œil de Bœuf*.”



## CHAPTER XXIII.

IN THE ŒIL DE BŒUF.

Paris, on the 5th of October, 1789, belonged bodily to the Commune—the Commune which had cursed and overthrown the monarchy, in effect—as it was to discover later—"because the monarchy was tyrannous and oppressive," proved a greater tyrant itself—a tyrant with neither reason, excuse nor mercy. It was a wild beast let loose on helpless society, rampant, raging, devouring, insatiable.

Incapable of overpowering it, helpless to defend themselves against it, the nobles of France had abandoned hope and prepared for flight. Hundreds of them had left Paris, hundreds more were leaving, with thousands of the aristocratic class for company. Most of them fled to Germany and England, and others still were ready to follow their example.

Helene Sainte Maur had remained.

Twice Sir Philip had implored her to go, but she had sternly refused. Her motive, she said, was that feeling of friendship and duty which kept her at the Queen's side. The falling fortunes of her unhappy sovereign, instead of alienating her, as it had so many of her professed friends, had created a stronger tie for her, and she would not desert her.

Sir Philip's brothers and the brave Dumesnil had counseled him to go, and confessed that they themselves desired earnestly to leave the stricken capital, and proposed to do so as soon as he consented to go with them.

But Sir Philip had twice declared his determination to remain, even in the face of any danger that could possibly threaten, so long as the woman he worshiped continued to stay. He urged them to go without him, but to this they refused to listen; they must all depart or all remain—together.

In fact, nothing could surpass the noble unselfishness of these four brave men, one of whom thus refused to abandon a woman, and the others to abandon a comrade, on the threshold of mortal perils which they believed impended over them if they remained.

The three valets had been offered liberty to return to England, with promises that their wages would still be regularly paid them; but they were grievously hurt by the mere proposition, and avowed their intention not to budge an inch without their masters.

Even Clarise, to whom her mistress had offered passage to England, with a handsome *douceur*, had emphatically declined.

Thus there was, in effect, an unspoken but irrevocable compact between these heroic characters which bound them together as participants in the most sanguinary tragedy that has ever been exhibited upon the world's stage.

Sir Philip had, however, determined, as we have already intimated, to once more urge Helene to recede from her stern and heroic resolution; and his visit to Versailles was partly induced by this motive.

It was with an almost tremulous eagerness that he now entered the magnificent "oval salon" or great gallery of the Palace, to which he had been directed to come by the note he had received from Helene.

This immense gallery was constructed so as to give a perfect view of the exquisite gardens of the chateau. Seventeen lofty windows faced them and opened upon

a balcony three hundred feet long and supported by stately pillars, with a pavement of marble. The interior wall of the hall, opposite the windows, was formed by seventeen arches with panels of pier-glass, and of the same proportions as the windows. Twenty-four elegant pilasters extended between the arches and the windows. At the farther end of this splendid gallery was a group of rare and antique statues, among them that of Bacchus, Germanicus and Diana. This last mentioned statue was famed for the remarkable resemblance between it and Helene Sainte Maur, to which we have already made reference. Singularly, Sir Philip had never observed it before; but now, as he saw Helene standing near the statue, where she had been waiting for him, he suddenly stopped and stared at these two figures, the one rigid, white and icy; the other with her fair arm leaning on the marble neck, glowing, pulsing, warm with life, an incarnation of the sylvan goddess.

Helene saw the wondering expression in his eyes and came toward him with a smile.

"Ah, you are very welcome," she said, extending her hand to him with inimitable grace; "especially since our recent guests were such unpleasant ones. And so you, too, have been tasting some of the bitter which even our Paris offers with its sweets?" she continued, as she led him to one of the casements.

"Yes," responded Belmore, the rich and flexible tones of his voice a little shaken as he looked upon her. "But it is sweet indeed to find you here in security, after that fierce invasion. And your ancestress there," pointing to the statue, "for ancestress she must have been, has doubtless had something to do with your safety."

"Oh, I see that you are not to be convinced, although I have insisted that there was no possible danger here from the poor creatures. But," she observed,

reflectively, "perhaps I may need her protection in very earnest, soon."

"How?" ejaculated Sir Philip, starting violently at these ominous words. "What is it you fear?"

Helene raised her eyes slowly to his with a mournful expression in their dark depths that to him presaged worse evils than her tongue could have recounted. But her voice, as mournful as her eyes, had no tremor of fear in it as she answered him:

"My friend, do you know what it is that the mob of women and idle men represent? Well, it is that unreasoning and terrible multitude that calls itself 'the people.' France is approaching a frightful crisis. It has no resources, it is bankrupt at last. It can not feed the starving. Famine may be borne with resignation, with fortitude, when inflicted by the omnipotent; but when it comes through the sole agency of a debauched and profligate class who feast in the midst of want and riot in the sight of the public miser it is the inevitable forerunner of horrors."

Amazed at such utterances, and at the preternaturalness of her manner, Belmore recoiled for a moment. Then he asked, huskily:

"Is it possible that you can think this? Do you believe that France is threatened with anarchy?"

"Yes!" The voice was passionless. It might have been the oracle whose likeness she bore, so inexorable she appeared who uttered that fiat.

"But surely there are no visible signs of such an awful catastrophe," said Sir Philip, his heart belying the words.

"No visible signs?" responded Helene, with a flash almost contemptuous. Then, with a compassionate gesture, she said:



"Poor France! She is in night. And for her there is no prophet."

For several minutes there was silence between the two. Then, waking from reflections that were plainly torturing him, Belmore asked, hesitatingly:

"And if these evils come—you will not stay in Paris, in France?"

The fair face flushed; the eyes grew resplendent with a light he had never yet seen there till now; it seemed to him to illumine her soul for an instant, that he might behold the majesty of it.

"You have said that Paris is no place for women now. I have not answered that before, but I will answer it now. I grant the truth of it, if you mean women who are mere butterflies or drudges. For women of another kind there will soon be duties here as imperative as they are stern and hard to perform. It matters not how much fortitude and heroism will be required or demanded, women will be found here who possess it. No, I shall not leave Paris. I am the friend of the Queen, of the woman who has harmed no one, and whom my gallant countrymen, finding defenseless, dare to persecute and insult. Well, after a little while they will do more—but I am not here to utter prophecies to you. I will not tell you of the fearful visions that have appalled me. Let it be enough to say now that I believe they shadow realities that are close behind them."

"And with such premonitions you persist in staying here?"

Belmore asked this question with asperity. He knew quite well what would be her reply.

"Terrible as those realities may be, I remain to confront them—with her."

Helene pointed with her open palm toward the apartment of the Queen; and, as Belmore looked at the

diminutive hand, white, blue-veined and tender as a child's, he wondered; in the white bosom of this woman beat the heart of a knight. At the end of a minute of moody silence, he asked:

"And if the Queen could be persuaded to leave France, would you depart with her?"

Helene started violently, as if his question offered something after which she had been groping. In her eyes was a counter-question, as she turned them full upon him and answered:

"I would depart with her—perhaps."

"Perhaps! After the Queen, could there be any inducement to keep you longer here?"

Belmore spoke with painful eagerness. He was already fully infected with her fears; he could already conjure scenes that were horrifying, in the midst of which Helene stood, moved, and shared them, always in peril of her life.

"Probably not," was the slow answer. But even while his hopes were rising, she sent them for the instant toppling into ruins. "The Queen, however, will not put faith in my warnings. She will be convinced only when they are verified or when it will at least be too late."

"And your own resolve, can nothing change it?"

His eyes and voice betrayed the infinite sadness of his soul, and the utter impotence of his will.

"Nothing can change it," she answered, gently. She was regarding him curiously, as he stood with drooping head before her, his arms folded tightly over his breast as though to still the tumult in his heart.

He was not conscious of the look that rested upon, nay, the look that caressed, him. There was, nevertheless, a revelation in her eyes that—had he seen it—would have made his heart leap. But it passed before he lifted

his head. Then she laid her hand upon his sleeve, and he felt it vibrate even through that thick covering, while she in her turn questioned:

"Tell me of your own plans? There can be no sensible excuse for you to remain here. You came here in search of pleasure."

"And remain to fulfill a duty."

He had stopped her with a gesture full of sternness, with a look full of dignity; and she was neither surprised nor offended. A rose-flush came into her cheeks, and a light—like that which sudden happiness quickens—dwelt in her eyes for a second ere she could veil them. The white lids were lowered, the silken lashes hid the opaline rays as they died. He had seen neither the red flush nor the furtive light, and she was grateful. Driving back the thoughts that for that little but eventful interval had possessed her, she raised her eyes to his again, and now they were calm and reposeful. His grave voice had not halted; and as it fell upon her ear with a cadenced melody she had but just now discovered, it told her that his resolve, also, had been taken. He would remain; and, if she permitted it, would share her duties as he intended to share her peril.

Helene reflected; she was reviewing all that he had said. Her decision was not hasty, but it was prompt and final:

"So be it. There is much that you can do here, perhaps, in aid of the Queen, and I have not the right to deprive her of such services. And since you know that for her sake alone I stay, know also that in aiding her you place me under obligations. Still, I would not urge you to remain here. Indeed, I try to feel regret over your decision; but since you have so determined, I confess to you that I am both pleased and gratified."

Belmore seized the hand she extended to him and pressed it to his lips. In spite of his mournful forebodings, of his intense anxieties, he experienced a sober joy as he felt that he and she were to be drawn closer together by the very circumstances which caused his distress and excited his fears.

After another interval of silence, during which each occupied the thoughts of the other, Helene stirred out of her reverie, with a faint sigh that was not one of pain.

"I fear I must say adieu to you now," she said ; and there was a peculiar gentleness in her voice and manner that thrilled him. "The Queen," who knows that I came here to meet you, expected me to return to her as soon as I could do so. She is suffering from this new shock and needs me. You return to Paris at once, do you not?"

"Yes," he replied, as they walked slowly toward the great entrance—that entrance which in a few hours more would be besieged by that very multitude she had just described. There they parted—for the last time on that threshold which royalty was soon to cross for the last time also. Even her prescient mind gave her no glimpse of the tragedy of the morrow, as she stood there in all her regal beauty, peacefully smiling into the face of her departing knight.



## CHAPTER XXIV.

### THE SIXTH OF OCTOBER.

The entertainment given at Versailles on the 1st of October brought unhappy results, as Helene had predicted. The fête was brilliant—and fatal. In their enthusiasm and zeal the young nobles had pledged their honor, their swords and their lives to the King; and for awhile the royal family appeared in a box of the little theatre where the fête was given. These incidents were so distorted by the time they reached the City of Gossip as to be merely monstrous falsehoods.

The “people” were aroused; the Assembly denounced to them the Court and King as traitors. The Tiers-Etats sent out their secret emissaries to fire the black hearts of the mob that lay in waiting—always in waiting—in the six converging alleys of the Faubourg St. Antoine. Each day the rabble grew fiercer, until the afternoon of the fifth, when it culminated.

Then, hurling its foul oaths at the terrible God who was later to visit His vengeance upon them, the insurgents tramped to Versailles, meeting on the way those who were returning, and forcing many of them to go back.

At Versailles, no adequate preparation for defense had been made. The most accessible portion of the palace was left absolutely free to the invaders. The gates were flung open at dawn of the morning of the memorable sixth, and with the howls of jungle-beasts the insurgents forced their way into the palace.

Then the scenes that gave the lie to French manhood were frightful. The few who proved the truth of "chivalry" were massacred by the thousands who proved the universal lust of blood. From hall to hall the body-guards were pursued, hunted, cut down, butchered. Tumult without, pandemonium within. The Queen awoke from a troubled dream; listened in alarm to the rush of feet as the mob approached her door.

She springs from her bed, and, holding on to the carved post, waits, expecting the worst. But a nearer and a swifter step than the merciless mob's comes to her straining ear, and then the door of her chamber flies open, and Helene Sainte Maur rushes to her bedside. The Queen stretches out her hand.

"Helene!" she murmurs; and reeling with a momentary faintness she leans heavily upon the bosom of her friend.

"Compose yourself, Madam," exclaimed the latter, supporting the swaying form of the Queen with a hand as firm as though it had been of iron.

"But, my children?" murmured the Queen, faintly.

"They are with the King now; they have just been sent to him," replied Helene, bending like a protecting goddess over the drooping form. The disheveled hair falls like a veil of crinkled sunshine around her fair head; her eyes are like the sun itself when set in a tropic sky of azure; her face, in all its wondrous outlines, is calm as that of the marble Diana, and she does not belie her wonderful resemblance.

"Fly, Madame!" rings out from her lips like the tones of a silver trumpet. At the instant she utters this warning the Queen's maids enter, lamenting, dismayed, bewildered. Helene seizes a robe, throws it over the bare white shoulders of the Queen, and directs the maids, whom she has calmed with a word, to bear

their mistress to the King's apartment. Then, as the assassins burst into the room, she turns upon them and spreads out her arms before them. They hesitate, only for a moment; but that moment is longer than enough; the Queen has been hurried out of the chamber; and five of the Swiss Guards have pressed around the intrepid woman who holds the entrance. Inspired by a glance, a word, and the courage they see in that delicate form, they escort her, with bristling bayonets, to the room where the Queen waits. And there they turn again, a quincunx of breathing statues.

Hark! the sound, a score of times repeated, of the axes of the mob at the door of the *Ceil de Bœuf* startles them; minutes are eternities. But, before the thunders cease, a band of Grenadiers enters, sent by Lafayette, the commander-in-chief. They join the Guards, and with leveled bayonets together they clear the palace.

There is a lull within. Then there comes from without a cry which reaches the royal ears with a doubtful meaning:

"The King! Let us see the King!"

The King hurries out upon the balcony; and the Queen and Helene follow.

And now there is enacted one of those amazing scenes which never occur except in a riot—in Paris.

Without knowing why, King and Queen, Body-Guards and National Guards, the nobles and the "people" all are frantically waving the tri-color.

That is the guerdon of peace, is it not?

Trust no sign, it is fallacious; believe no asseveration, it is a caprice. The drift of the wind, the temper of a woman, the disposition of a French mob are "subject to change" at any moment.

A voice rises out of the midst of the throng. It is

sinister and familiar; it is the voice of the journalist Dudevant. It falls like a knell upon the ears of smiling royalty:

“Le Roi a Paris!”

A whisper of dismay ripples along the balcony, flits through the halls, penetrates the chambers and fills the chateau with an ominous, a dreadful echo:

“The King to Paris?”

Yes; and for the last time forever. At the command of a mob royalty must abandon Versailles.

Poor Louis! With butchers and market-porters, with fish-women and those reeking chiffoniers whose garments reeked with the filth of the St. Denis sewer-main, with vagrants and thieves, he trudged on to Paris. These were his escort, and they guarded him and his with eyes of hawks, as they swarmed around his coach.

Thus he was dragged to Paris, he and his Queen. Thus he was dragged to the town-hall, placed upon a balcony, and, with a tri-color pinned to his hat, exhibited to the gaping, leering vagabonds who shielded their crimes under the name of “Republican.” But the exhibition was too tame, and the mob clamored:

“Put the bonnet-rouge on him, la!”

The hat was removed, and the red cap of the Commune perched upon the bowed head of the descendant of St. Louis, who obeyed even this indignity with a smile. This sovereign was not a physical coward; but we repeat it, he was a poltroon.

The sight of this ignominy appeased the rabble, as does a full meal a glutton—for a day.

That night saw the royal family domiciled—that is to say, imprisoned—in the Tuilleries. There they were to languish until humanity should prove again how absolutely inhuman it may be.

Within ten days after this ignoble display the pop-



ulace was again raging. Now, the "people" were no longer mere savages; they were wild beasts stripped of everything human except its shape, demons of Hell, and Hell was—Paris.

The slaughter of the innocents had now begun in earnest. Whoever stood forth for law and order, whoever bespoke mercy for others, whoever refused to mouth the miserable cant of the day was a "suspect," an aristocrat, a "traitor" to the people, and stood forth doomed.

The life of the Queen, immured in the Tuilleries and subjected to unremitting torture through the constant espionage and restraints imposed upon her, was even more unhappy that it had been at the Palace of Versailles. She was now in constant dread of coming evils presaged by those around her who desired her to hear their cruel surmises. For herself she had almost ceased to think. Her face had long since lost its insouciant expression, and pale and careworn it appeared day after day, as she stood looking mournfully out upon the gardens where she had held so many brilliant lawn fêtes before her fickle people had tired of her. She was almost always silent; and a smile never brightened her face.

Helene, through the influence of Mirabeau, and of another at a later period, of whom we shall yet speak, was never interfered with in her daily visits, and these visits were positively the only solace the keepers of the Queen permitted her.

Thus passed the slow revolving months, each one bringing the doomed woman nearer to the guillotine. Neither she nor Helene, however, had the remotest notion that her feet were drifting toward so fearful a goal; and Helene was not without hope, secretly felt as yet that she could bring the Queen to consent to

escape from France. Meantime, it was necessary that she should continue to receive, to fête, to banquet, those who held the reins of the government such as it was, or who were the first receptacles of the secrets of the Commune and the Girondists. Accordingly, she made no change in her social forms, but kept her spacious chateau filled with the 'elite of Paris, though necessarily interspersed with a few rising parvenus like Danton, a great, hulking young lawyer who was already climbing toward the summit, albeit on the backs of the fallen great. He was a frequent visitor at the famous house in St. Germain, where his coarse features and hoarse voice made him conspicuous among those who tolerated because they feared him. Toward Helene he had very soon manifested a depth of feeling which gave her a certain ascendancy over him, and at a later time doubtless saved her from being carried down to death with the Queen.

Sir Philip had become the constant and recognized attendant of Helene. She freely called upon him for whatever service she desired him to perform or considered it safe for him to undertake, and he obeyed with an eagerness that proved how fervid was his interest in serving her. Withal, he was never intrusive, waiting for a signal or invitation before seeking her; a delicacy of feeling prompting him to sacrifice his own ardent wishes to her convenience and inclination. But he was quite as prompt to avail himself of chance interviews; and there were moments, even in the midst of a throng, when he found opportunities to lead her to some out-of-the-way corner, or into some quiet spot in the garden; and these moments were to him of inestimable value. To her, also, they were comforting and restful. Then all the vivacity that seemed inexhaustible while she was surrounded by crowds of people left her, fell from her

as a mask whose uses are suspended. - She became subdued, almost melancholy ; and at such times Belmore felt himself more than repaid for his hours and days of waiting and longing. Her conversation, when they were thus alone together, breathed a nobility of soul, a majesty of thought, a delicacy of sentiment which wreathed her with a thousand charms and inspired him with emotions that were as sweet as they were unwonted.

In the meantime, Mirabeau, who was now a colossus in position as well as in stature, was receiving much of Helene's attention. He appeared in all her drawing-rooms, and was the central figure always. To one of these stately gatherings he came prepared to arrange with her the details of a plan they had already discussed with several confidential friends who were in sympathy with the Queen if not with the King, namely, the feasibility of the escape of the royal family.

There was but one way in which these conspirators could be brought together without exciting suspicion, and that was by means of a reception.

The fronts of the balconies, the facade of the mansion, and the main entrance were brightly illuminated on the night of this fête. The lofty doors were thrown open, and on either side of them a tall servant in blue livery announced, one by one, the persons or parties who were constantly ascending the marble steps. Great vases of marble and of bronze, filled with exotics, adorned the balcony rails and pilasters. From within, over a grand staircase, the softest music rippled down in a perpetual cascade of sound.

Carriages rolled rapidly up, deposited their burdens, and as rapidly rolled away. The salon, nearly one hundred feet in length and nearly half as broad, was

thronged at 10 o'clock; and it was quite 12 ere the arrivals ceased.

As the night wore on, couple after couple passed out into the banquet-room or into the pavilion that enclosed the garden, and which offered a delightfully cool, shadowy and continuous promenade.

This assemblage surpassed every other of the many that during that memorable time enjoyed the hospitality of this remarkable woman. Almost every one of the leading spirits of the day was there. Numerous representatives of the nobility gave splendor to the scene; and scattered conspicuously among the many and lively groups could be seen the rich uniforms of the military, the most interesting of whom, in the eyes of Mirabeau and of Helene, was a dark-faced Corsican officer, a sub-lieutenant of artillery just created major—Napoleon Bonaparte, the subsequent master of Europe, who was destined to sweep away the feudal traditions which had made serfs of the peoples of a continent.

Among others whose fortunes had raised them above the multitude was the Duke of Rochefoucalde; the jurist Malasherbes; Thomas Jefferson, then United States Minister to France; Champfort, the misanthrope, who railed at women because he had tired of a certain class of the sex; Brissot, who was forever quarreling with Mirabeau over the position of the Jacobins; Lafayette, whose star was at its meridian; Mirabeau—

But here we will end the list, since it is Mirabeau of whom we are eager to speak, and of whom we have most to relate.

And while the entrancing valse is engaging the younger portion of this magnificent gathering, we will follow him into the little library room at the end of the main corridor, into which Helene has drawn him.

On this gala night she had found opportunities to



communicate with those whose assistance she had asked, and she now had gone to him confident and hopeful.

Without waiting for him to introduce another and more tender subject which was trembling on his lips, Helene began to broach the one that wholly engrossed her own thoughts: "How to save the Queen, the King, and the honor of France."

The King was to leave France with the family secretly and fly to the frontier. Then he was to issue a proclamation to "the people," declaring the Assembly an unlawful body and dissolving it. He was to call upon the nobles and the heads of the despoiled clergy to assemble around him for defense and for the subjugation of the rebels. Mirabeau was to remain quietly in Paris, to watch the Assembly and report its acts.

"It only remains to be seen," said Helene, "whether the King has energy and decision enough to follow instructions. If he has not, he will make this plan miscarry as he has every other. As for the Queen, undoubtedly she has sufficient courage and character to be relied upon; and we must act upon the King mainly through her. You must go to her, and explain everything to her. You will tell her that you come from me; it will inspire her with confidence. You know what I expect of you, my friend, loyalty, courage, and action."

Mirabeau had listened attentively, his heavy brows contracted with thought. Then, reiterating his promises, he carefully rehearsed the details of the plan. At first he spoke as she had spoken, in guarded tones. But as he warmed to the subject, his voice, always resonant, rose to a most imprudent pitch.

Helene, as soon as she could, checked him:

"Do not raise your voice like that," she remonstrated; "you talk as loudly as if you were addressing the Commons."

"Pardon," returned he, with a penitent look. "Still there is no one to hear us."

But as if to rebuke his imprudent confidence, at that very moment, both of them heard, distinctly in the adjoining room, the door of which was shut, the sound of a saber or sword falling sharply against the door.

Mirabeau sprang to open it, but it resisted his efforts, it was locked; and while he vainly tried to wrench it open, the sound of retreating footsteps too well assured him of the recent presence of an eavesdropper.

Without a word of comment upon this ominous occurrence, the two gazed at each other a moment with troubled looks and, silently leaving the library, mingled composedly with the guests in the refectory.

## CHAPTER XXV.

### DUDEVANT DISAPPEARS.

On the fifth day after D'Artivan's interview with Mother Cartouche, two gens d'armes went to the lodgings of Achille Dudevant. They knocked at his door and were answered by the concierge, who opened it, and manifested the greatest surprise on beholding the uniforms and the muskets.

"Mon Dieu," exclaimed the concierge, in trepidation; "what is it you want?"

"We wish to see Monsieur Dudevant," replied the gens d'armes, and they pushed their way without ceremony into the room. No one was there, and they passed into the bedroom, the concierge following.

"Well," said the latter, reassured now that his own head was not in request, "you see that he is not here. I could have told you that certainly—"

"Hold your tongue and answer my questions," commanded the elder of the two officers, impatiently.

The concierge shrugged his shoulders satirically at this difficult order, and was silent.

"Now, pay attention," began the gens d'armes, in a sort of unison, which to the concierge was very funny indeed; "where is he?"

"Oh, you think he is hiding, do you?" exclaimed the man, breaking his silence as though it would be a great relief to speak. "Well, he is not here, I tell you, and I do not know where he is. He has not been here since the day before yesterday."

"Very well," returned the elder of the two, grimly. "You will say nothing, when he returns, of our visit or errand. We will come every evening after it is dark to inquire for him, and if you inform him or assist him in concealing himself—*morbleu*, you had better have a priest ready to shrive you, do you hear?"

"Do I hear? I should say so. I could have heard that if it had been whispered to me across the Seine," grumbled the *concierge*, as he gazed furtively after the departing *gens d'armés*. "The devil! I always knew that Dudevant would get himself in trouble. He is a sly chap, and then he comes in at all hours, or not at all. So. I will keep his apartments one week. To disappear in these times for one week is to—well, it's the same thing as saying one is in prison or dead."

But Dudevant was in neither of these extreme predicaments, although his position was hardly more agreeable. Dudevant, in fact, had met with an adventure, as he was returning home on the night he disappeared. He had been seized from behind while threading the narrow alley called the *Rue Polonceau*, thrown down and hammered about the face and body until he was insensible and covered with blood. Toward morning he was found lying against the wall of a garden, where he had evidently been attacked; and as his features were so swollen, discolored and otherwise changed as to render it doubtful whether or not he could be recognized, should they take the trouble to attempt his identification, the officers hailed a charette that was passing the corner of the miserable little street, and took the still unconscious journalist to that very worst of hells in Paris, the *Salpêtrière*. Here they announced that they had a dead man to deliver; a piece of humor which almost cost them the trouble of carting him off again.

This institution, miscalled a hospital, was, as it still



is, located in the southeast portion of the city, on the Boulevarts St. Marcel and de l' Hôpital. It lies south and west of the Seine, and not far from the old barriers. To be threatened with a trip to the Salspetriere was to throw a sick person into convulsions or to cause him to "leave his bed and walk," so infamous was its management, so abominable were its arrangements, so filthy its accommodations. It was a gloomy and forbidding place, and its high dome, rising over everything else in the vicinity, instead of a beacon of hope, was a sign that a lazar-house was near.

Into this fearful place Dudevant was carried; and here he remained for weeks in a stupor before he showed any animation of either mind or body; then he remained, for months after that, with a partial paralysis. His mind was in a vacuous state, his limbs were flaccid, he could not use his voice. He had been terribly mauled, and the intention of his enemies, whoever they were, must have been to murder him. The inefficient treatment and careless nursing he received in the hospital retarded, indeed almost prevented, his recovery. But a tough constitution triumphed at last, and Dudevant was pronounced cured. When he walked out of the place he stopped in the Jardin des Plantes to meditate awhile, and inhale the fragrant odors from the grass and flowers. He had, of course, no suspicion that the gens d'armes had gone to arrest him; but he concluded that if he returned to his old lodgings he would probably find that his wardrobe had been sold for arrears of rent, and, if the rooms had been kept for him, the bill would meet him at the door for a stiff balance. He therefore took a thrifty view and went to the extreme north, near the Boulevard St. Martin, where he procured cheap apartments, paying a month's rent for them out of the money he had sewed up in his clothes,

and which had escaped the ghouls of the hospital. Here he remained during the entire month in complete seclusion, rapidly recuperating his depleted forces. At the end of that time he astonished his employers by walking into the *Moniteur* office smiling, robust, and nonchalant.

But Dudevant's enemies were not sleeping ; nor had they forgotten him. One week later he again disappeared, and this time finally, as we will explain.

There were seven of those gloomy tombs called prisons in the Capitol, all of which were kept supplied with tenants, most of whom were victims of the revolution. When any one suddenly dropped out of sight during this time his friends, if he had any, would go from one to the other of these prisons to inquire for him. The search was, therefore, necessarily a long and difficult one in most cases, and was often abandoned before it was half completed, either through discouragement or fear.

Soon after Dudevant's first disappearance, his two friends, Gascoigne and Long Nose, becoming uneasy, had sought him at the prisons, making the round with indefatigable energy and persistence ; but, of course, had heard nothing, and found no traces of him. Oblivion—which dwelt in Paris now, if anywhere—had effectually swallowed him ; and his friends gave up their search.

When he emerged from his retirement he sought these two, and the trio devoted two or three days and nights in celebrating the "prodigal's return." Dudevant had not told them either of the murderous attack that had been made upon him, nor of his long immurement within the walls of Salpêtrière. He enveloped the whole matter in a cloak of mystery, and gave his friends the impression that his prolonged absence had been

caused by "the government's demands upon him as their faithful and secret agent."

While he was enjoying the eclat from this rumor he was suddenly lost sight of for the second time; but, instead of becoming uneasy, and going about as before, with long faces and anxious inquiries after Dudevant, they shook their heads mysteriously, winked and smiled when questioned themselves, and remarked:

"Oh, that sly Achille! He is the devil of a fellow, I tell you. Bah, let him alone, he knows where he is, and so does the chief."

But one day they encountered D'Artivan in the street. He recollected them in a moment; a look of sly malevolence crept into his scarred face, and he stopped in front of them.

"Good day, garçons," said he, with condescension; "you are out for a holiday, then?"

Gascoigne, comprehending this covert allusion to their masquerade at the café of the Three Virgins, began to bristle.

"And you, Monsieur, are out for a 'constitutional,' I see," retorted he, staring significantly at the scar on D'Artivan's cheek.

The latter turned scarlet with anger.

"After all," said he, "it is nothing that may not happen to any gentleman who settles his quarrels with his sword."

It should be said here that immediately after the revelation made to him by Dudevant, he had gone to Paul Cambray, to worm out of the latter a confession of the supposed parts he and Clarise had played in the affair of the duel. Paul had talked so innocently of it, however, and had manifested such complete ignorance in the case that D'Artivan was convinced that the story Dudevant had circulated was false and malicious, and

had thought no more of Paul and his fiancée in connection with his disgrace and misfortune. But his amour propre was now about to receive a second and a final shock.

Gascoigne laughed loudly at the Gascon's last speech.

"Ho, ho," cried he; "you are becoming reconciled to your adversary, eh?"

"Thousand devils!" snarled D'Artivan; "my adversary has not heard or seen the last of me yet. Lately, for a number of months, I have been after more important game; but—"

"What!" exclaimed Gascoigne, with a malicious sneer; "you would retaliate upon a girl, then, after she has fairly beaten you with a weapon of your own choosing? Phew, what a hero you are, va."

"I do not know what you mean," observed D'Artivan, looking sullenly from one to the other of the young men, who were now laughing scornfully.

"Pshaw!" sneered Gascoigne; "you still pretend that you do not know who 'Monsieur Dechamp' was?"

"Come, you are a droll fellow!" chimed Long Nose, putting the tip of his forefinger to the end of his enormous beak.

"Thousand devils!" shouted D'Artivan, whose misgivings had all returned; "explain the meaning of all this palaver?"

"Oh, certainly," was the sarcastic rejoinder; "we will repeat, and again repeat it, if you desire; listen: you owe the beauty spot on your cheek to a girl, Mlle. Clarise, the sweetheart of Paul Cambray, and it was she, she, I tell you, who put it there, with her own little rapier; and you did not step on a piece of orange peel, either, voila!"

D'Artivan recoiled, speechless with rage. After all, then, it was true. He felt a hot flood of hatred stifling



him. It was true! He recollected now the curious likeness the young cavalier bore to some one whom he could not recall. It was the bitter truth. Well, he could still punish the girl—through her lover, who was in fact the real author of his disgrace and disfigurement, the coward. Then, as the two friends stood looking at him mockingly, enjoying his discomfiture, he suddenly bethought him of their comrade's misfortune, which he, D'Artivan, had brought about. A malignant smile played over his features as he turned away from them; and twisting his head over his shoulder, with a sardonic glance at them, he remarked:

"And so your friend Monsieur Dudevant, who was so efficient and officious during that stupid affair at the café, has gone to serve scraps to the other prisoners at the Conciergerie?"

"Ha, what is that you say? Dudevant in prison?" cried the two, running after D'Artivan, their own faces paling with emotions as deep as his a few moments before.

"You will tell him, when you find him there, that it was I, D'Artivan, who sent him there!" And with this rough response, the Gascon hurried on, without again looking back.

Gascoigne and Long Nose stopped to consider what was to be done. Their faces were very pale; tears were gathering in their eyes; they gazed sorrowfully at each other, and shook their heads despairingly. Then they pledged themselves to do whatever they could, at once, to save their friend, and parted without hope. Nor was there room for any; they could not be of the least service. Robespierre and Danton were at that period at the beginning of their feud, Dudevant had been the confidential agent of the one, and Dudevant's arrest had been demanded by the gods of the revolution—the sans

culottes, at the hands of the other of these two implacable foes. There was therefore absolutely no help for the journalist.

His name had been added to the list of condemned, and Robespierre had made no attempt to save him, fearing the sans culottes who wanted his death, and caring nothing for his dupe, who merely wished to live.

At the Concierge, Dudevant was subjected to torture, in order to force from him criminating statements to be used against his masters; but his masters had made him their tool, and not their confidant, and he had really nothing to reveal. His torturers did not believe him when he told them this. They took him back to the long vault-room, in which he and one hundred more occupied beds of straw, and promised him another application of the torture on the next day unless he confessed. They believed he had become such an adept in lying that he was still lying from the very stubbornness of habit.

When his miserable companions saw him limping toward one of the straw pallets, they gathered around him with expressions of sympathy.

"My poor friend," said one, "you have then survived it?"

"Part of it," replied Dudevant, faintly, but with perfect sang froid.

"What! are you to go back?"

"Yes, this is only a respite—if I tell nothing," gasped he; "but, *mon Dieu!* I have positively nothing to tell. However, they will not believe me."

"Monstrous!" cried a score of voices. Poor wretches! All their indignation, all their protests only rebounded from the rough walls in that dungeon; they never reached the light of day nor fell upon one merciful ear.

"Well, how do you feel now?" inquired another sympathizer, observing the increased pallor of the latest victim.

But by this time Dudevant was past answering with his tongue. He was white to his lips; he could no longer speak. He motioned them to bring him pen and paper, knowing that some of them had managed to conceal these precious trifles about their person. When the tablets and a crayon were brought to him he wrote:

"I am dumb as the child of Tantalus, if not as beautiful. The effect of that last wrench has returned again; it has taken my breath. As for the condition of my body, here is a couplet you may sing for your own comfort, you who live in expectation of acquiring my experience:

"He who is racked, released, and racked again,  
Knows best the luxury of ease from pain."

"To end with an aphorism, there is more dignity in death than in life."

On the following day Dudevant was taken for another trial of the knee-clamp; but his persecutors were overzealous in the application, and the journalist expired in the chair.

The Marquis had disposed of one of his enemies, the man through whose means the principal characters in this historic tale were brought together.

Another of his victims, and the most innocent of all, was soon to follow the first.

## CHAPTER XXVI.

### THE LEOPARD.

During the residency of Louis XVI. at Versailles, and for some time afterwards, there was a fine zoological collection in a building adapted to the purpose, and which was called the menagerie. This building was situated at the end of a conduit which crossed the grand canal, then a popular boating ground for the guests at the palace, and it was therefore somewhat isolated. At night it would have been very quiet in its vicinity but for the echoes of the interminable cries of the savage and restless beasts.

The interior of the building was divided into two large portions, one of which was arranged for winter and the other for summer use. Three care-takers were employed, a head keeper and two assistants, whose lodgings were several hundred feet from the building. After feeding and leaving water for their "family," as these keepers were in the habit of calling their unruly charges, they left the building at sunset, and went to their own quarters for the night. The place was consequently deserted and closed between dusk and day-break; but during the day the menagerie was accessible to any one who chose to visit it.

Among the animals there confined was a full-grown leopard, a present to the King from an Indian Rajpoot. It was an exceedingly fierce brute, possessed astonishing strength, and was believed to be untamable. On account of its ferocious disposition it was regarded by



the keepers with the greatest aversion and even fear, although it was confined in an unusually strong cage. This cage was placed at the extreme end of the passage, on either side of which the animals were ranged; and opposite was another cage of exactly similar size, construction and appearance, in which until recently a harmless chimpanzee had been kept. Both these cages rested on small iron wheels, so that they could be easily rolled to any spot desired without much effort. The bars were rather too far apart—about four inches and a half; and the only entrance was through a small wicket, secured by a strong bolt.

The leopard appeared to be forever in motion, trotting back and forth the length of its cell, or leaping with lightning-like bounds against the latticed bars, while it uttered the most terrific and piercing cries of rage or disappointment.

Months had elapsed after the removal of the royal family from Versailles, and the ancient seat of the Grand Monarque had once more resumed its solitary aspect, despite the magnificence which remained.

On a bright morning in January, after the chateau had been closed, a showily-dressed man was idly sauntering toward the building we have described. He had wandered for an hour or more through the winding paths of the gardens, where a mournful solitude brooded, and was now approaching the menagerie, with the apparent purpose of looking at the animals, whose cries had attracted him.

As he walked through the passage, glancing carelessly at the restless prisoners on either side, and laughing at the snarling manner in which they greeted him, he was suddenly assailed by an outburst of fury from the leopard's cage.

"Morableu, what a monster!" exclaimed he, stopping

abruptly in front of the brute. As he stared at it, with a feeling of awe at first, then of fascination, the leopard trotted slowly to the wicket, and, crouching down with its muzzle to the floor, steadily regarded him in its turn, mute and motionless.

For several minutes the man stood thus, never moving his eyes from the ferocious visage, while its green eyeballs blazed into his, intense, searching, dilating. It really seemed as if these two, the man and the brute, were moved at the same moment by the same impulse; that they recognized each other, or were, by this mute and prolonged interchange of glances, establishing an acquaintance.

Up to this time the man had seen no one in the building. He had entered by the open door, and had reached this remote corner of the passage without encountering any one. Now, while he stood absorbed in the contemplation of his terrible viz-a-viz, he was startled by the sound of a surly voice behind him, and turning hastily he saw issuing from the opposite cage a short, muscular man of about forty, very dark-skinned and sullen-featured, who came slowly toward him. This individual carried his head in a peculiarly drooping fashion, as if he desired to hide his face from observation, or to avoid conversation. In his hands he carried some tools he had been repairing.

"Pardieu!" exclaimed he, in an exceedingly husky voice, at the same time raising his head sideways and upward, that he might peer into the face of the stranger without exposing his own to scrutiny; "Monsieur must be a tamer of beasts."

This unexpected compliment evidently pleased the other, for a slight blush tinged his cheeks, while he assumed an air of importance at once.

"Oh," returned he, superciliously; "I confess I pos-

sess a certain kind of power over wild animals. It is a gift, you know."

The keeper surveyed him out of his stealthy eyes with something between doubt and admiration; then his gaze wandered to the leopard which still lay crouched upon the floor, slowly beating its flexible tail, but uttering no cries, showing no fangs, its half-closed eyes following the slightest movements of the stranger with an interest that seemed human.

The under-keeper, astonished at this apparent docility of the dreaded monster, turned again to the visitor, and regarded him with eager curiosity.

"Yes, you have it, you have it," he repeated to himself, excitedly; then:

"Well, if you could teach another person how to tame that miserable brute there, for instance?"

He pointed with his black forefinger at the leopard, as it lay with its head between its outstretched paws, blinking silently at the stranger.

"That would not be possible, I fear," replied the latter, unwilling to expose his false pretensions; "you can not impart a gift, though you may serve others by the exercise of it sometimes. Perhaps I may render that service to you soon, by subduing this leopard, which I perceive is a splendid subject. I should like, at some time or other, to try the exercise of my power on him."

"Ma foi!" observed the under-keeper, with an emphatic gesture; "that would be fine. Yes, yes, I should like that. Do you know," continued he, following a few steps after the "tamer of beasts," who was desirous of getting safely away with his honors, "that varmint is the plague of my life. Some fine day I expect it will get out of its cage, and then—my God!"

The very horror of his thoughts deprived the man of any further speech. He went on no further, but

abruptly turned around, and peered shudderingly at the still silent leopard, which was now standing on all fours and watching him through the wide bars of its prison.

The stranger had also turned abruptly. But instead of the leopard it was the under-keeper who engaged his attention now.

"Why do you think it possible for the leopard to escape from its cage?" asked he, in a singularly altered voice. For an instant, the under-keeper felt inclined to suspect that after all this stranger was himself afraid of the brute; but he answered:

"Sacre! I have seen him run his muzzle between the bars, seize the bolt of the wicket in his mouth, and move it forward and backward in the socket just as if he was testing it. He seems to have the sense of a man, pardi."

"So he has," assented the stranger, gravely. Then:

"Are all the other cages well secured?" inquired he.

"Perfectly so," responded the under-keeper, emphatically. "Bah! it would not be myself, Vincent Morceau, who would come in here alone at the first streak of the day, if some of these prowlers had a chance to mount my back."

"So, then, there is no one here at night?"

The under-keeper laughed boisterously.

"What! Do you think the howls of these brutes are lullabies to put people to sleep? These walls are thick, I tell you, but still they do not prevent us from hearing when the she-tiger and this 'miserable' join in a little concert—pardieu, no!"

The visitor reflected.

"And your name is Morceau, is it?" observed he, abruptly looking up.



"Did I say so, then? Certainly, my name is Morceau; and what may Monsieur's be?"

"Oh," replied the stranger, hesitatingly, as if he wished for time to coin a name, "my name is of no consequence. However, it is at your service—it is Ferdean."

"Ferdean," repeated the under-keeper, musingly; "that is an odd name. I have heard it before—I can not tell where. Very well, Monsieur Ferdean, I shall not forget you."

"Nor I you, Monsieur Morceau," rejoined the other, with sudden cordiality.

"And I hope, Monsieur Ferdean, that you will come here again and tame for me that devil of a leopard."

"I am inclined to think that I shall do so, my friend; and if I conclude accordingly, I shall let you know the day before I come for that purpose, so that we may make suitable arrangements. In the meantime, say nothing about this to any one. I do not wish any notoriety in the matter; and besides, if I tame the leopard, the credit shall be yours."

"Mon Dieu, do you say so?" cried the under-keeper, quivering with delight. "Ho, ho, I shall certainly get a place, then, in the Jardin des Plantes, when this place is shut up, as it is going to be."

"That will be excellent," remarked the visitor, as he passed out of the building.

No sooner had the latter emerged into the grounds than his manner underwent as sudden and great a change as his voice had done a few minutes before. His countenance grew pale to ghastliness, his eyes assumed a wild expression, there was in them a mingling of terror and ferocity. He began to move at a faster and faster pace toward the inn, where he had left his horse; and by the time he had reached it he was running. In a very

few minutes he was mounted, and dashing at headlong speed toward Paris.

This man was D'Artivan. He had come to Versailles, as many other idlers had since the desertion of the court, with no other object than to wander over the place. It was his habit to hover about the habitations of the nobility, and Versailles at that time had many noble residences, some of which had not yet been closed up. D'Artivan had stopped at an inn, gossiped with the inn-keeper's wife, wandered around the gardens (to which he was admitted through the influence of a *livre*), and by mere chance had happened in the vicinity of the *menagerie*. That visit was to produce consequences at once frightful and unheard of.

## CHAPTER XXVII.

### D'ARTIVAN'S PLOT.

A week had elapsed after the visit of D'Artivan to the menagerie at Versailles, when that individual called one evening upon Paul Cambray, apparently teeming with a subject which he was in a hurry to discuss with his friend. Unfortunately, Paul was at home.

D'Artivan greeted him with more than usual friendliness.

"My dear friend," said he, laying his hand upon the young man's shoulder with smiling familiarity, "I have just been making a little bet for your benefit."

"A bet? But you know I never bet. And besides—"

"Oh, you need not be alarmed, my dear boy, you at least will not have it to pay; although it rests with you, absolutely with you, whether I win or lose."

"How is that?" demanded Paul, feeling a little vague uneasiness.

"I will tell you all about it. You know that Michelet, who always sings through his nose when he sees you?"

Paul frowned. The sound of that name was a nettle; it stung his pride. D'Artivan saw the frown, and passed his hand over his mouth to conceal the smile of satisfaction which he could not repress.

"Oh, you remember his impudence. For instance, when he went with us to see the Bengal tiger in the Jardin des Plantes, he was watching you more than the beasts, and sneering at every movement you made. While there, he said to me, aside :

“‘It is singular, the startling effect which the cries of wild beasts have upon some people. Did you observe just now, when the tiger gave that tremendous roar, how your little friend Paul-ine started back and actually turned pale?’”

Upon hearing this canard, which D'Artivan repeated or invented with many grimaces intended to show how he had listened to the aspersion, Paul grew not pale but red, and clinched his fist.

“He lied!” exclaimed he, between his teeth.

“I believe so,” remarked his friend, carelessly; “still, it was a slur that called for a—well, for something more than a rebuke. As your friend, I felt it necessary to prove him a liar instead of calling him one, do you see? An idea struck me: ‘Have you ever been to the little menagerie at Versailles?’ I asked him. He said he had. Then I said to him: ‘Very good; you have seen there the leopard that came from Rohilcund. Now, I will wager you ten louis d’ors that, if I ask him to do so, he will spend the night with me in front of the leopard’s cage.’”

“‘And how many keepers will your friend Paul-ine require to stay with him and protect him from the bark of the beast?’ asked the sneering fellow.

“‘None,’ I replied, feeling very much like cuffing his ears. ‘Paul and I will be there alone, and the outer door will be locked, as it always is.’

Well, Michelet accepted my wager, directly, and said to me, with another provoking sneer:

“‘Mon Dieu! if your little Paul-ine does that, you will find him in the morning with his head wrapped up in his coat.’”

“Serpent!” hissed Paul, irrelevantly.

“Oh, I could have knocked him down; but that would not have silenced his tongue. Besides, I knew



you, and I said to myself, 'I will punish this impudent slanderer, by winning his ten louis which he can not afford to lose; and, since I do not need them, and it will in fact be Paul, my friend, who will earn them, they will be his to spend—on his adorable Clarise.' Well, we were to have met the next day at Versailles, to arrange the matter with the keeper and so on. But an accident kept me from keeping the appointment; and the next day I found a note on my table, saying that he had waited for me, and, as I did not come, he supposed you had refused to go, just as he thought you would. Also, that he was going out of the city for a fortnight. I was greatly annoyed. Your reputation was at stake, do you see? So I watched for his return, and yesterday I met him in the Champ de Mars. He gave me bon jour, and all at once he began to laugh, clapped me on my arm, and said:

"How is it, my poor Victor, that you are always in the company of that young Cambray, who has the face of a girl, and is so nervous that he can not drink out of a full glass?"

"What! did the scoundrel say that?" shouted Paul, rising and walking wildly about the room.

"Those were his words. Well, I explained to him why I had been unable to meet him as agreed, and insisted on his going to Versailles with me at once. We went there and arranged everything. You are to go with me to-morrow afternoon at two, in a cabriolet."

Paul hesitated for several moments before he consented to this arrangement. Finally, as the picture of the sneering Michelet, who sang through his nose whenever they met, arose before him, he came up to the Gascon and, holding out his hand with a flourish, said:

"It is agreed; and if after that this Michelet dares to continue slandering me—"

He did not finish the ominous sentence, but shook his head menacingly, and twisted his moustache with an energy that spoke of the code.

At six o'clock on the evening after this interview the two friends rode up to the inn where D'Artivan had previously stopped, and the latter, leaving Paul there, drove off toward the canal. It was dark when he returned and with a surprising amount of haste he assisted Paul into the cabriolet and started again toward the canal. When they arrived at the building containing the animals, D'Artivan (who had dispensed with a driver) drove to a clump of trees some distance away, and, leaving the conveyance there, the two proceeded to the side entrance of the building. D'Artivan produced a key, and in a few moments they were standing before the cage of a leopard, over which the under-keeper had left a lantern suspended and brightly burning. Paul shivered a little as he looked around him, and this sensation increased to a tremor as he gazed into the eyes of the leopard, which in their turn were regarding him with an extremely hungry expression.

D'Artivan had scarcely spoken from the time they had started from the inn; and Paul soon recovered himself while amusedly observing his friend's apparent nervousness. Immediately his manner became bold; and his voice had a confident tone as he asked:

"Can we sleep in here!"

"Certainly," answered his friend, quickly; "we are to sleep in this cage opposite. See, I have had two bundles of straw placed in it. The pile further back from the wicket is yours. Let us get in, and we can talk until we become sleepy. Besides, we shall not be so likely to disturb these brutes, who are the very devil for noise when they are roused."

Paul crept through the open wicket to his bed of

straw at once, D'Artivan following. The latter then took from his pocket a flask, which he handed to Paul, remarking:

"It is a fine cordial; it will keep the dampness out of our lungs, and make our sleep the sounder. We have nothing to fear here, you see, since we have only to fasten our wicket—so, and here we are."

D'Artivan closed and bolted the wicket, and then, half reclining on the straw, began to gossip in a jocular strain. But his voice had an unnatural sound, it quavered, and sometimes entirely died away, as though his breath had failed. Paul remarked this, and also the trembling of his hands, and, wondering at his friend who seemed to have less nerve than himself, took a liberal draught from the flask, and passed it, observing:

"This is excellent stuff; it is a perfect warming-pan."

D'Artivan held the flask in both hands as he put the mouth of it to his own lips, and, after holding it there for some seconds, placed the stopper in it and returned it to his pocket.

Everything in the place was now silent. Only the hoarse breathing, or an occasional deep yawn, and a restless movement now and then, came from the cages. Both men had relapsed into silence also. Soon Paul's head began to droop; in a few minutes he sank gently on his side. He was soundly sleeping.

D'Artivan had not closed his eyes; he had kept them steadily fixed upon his friend's face, with a sort of glare. It reminded one of the expression on the visage of the leopard, when it stood with its muzzle at the wicket an hour before.

When Paul began to breathe heavily, D'Artivan rose up softly from his straw, without rustling it in the least. Then he unbolted the wicket and slipped outside of the cage. He drew the wicket to and bolted it again from

the outside, after which he went behind the cage, and, putting his shoulder against the thick cross-bar, pushed it slowly and noiselessly toward the cage of the leopard. The bed of straw upon which Paul lay sleeping was so arranged that his head rested against the bars; and D'Artivan was deliberately steering the cage so that this end of it would touch the corresponding end of the cage of the leopard.

In the meantime, the great brute was, to all appearances, asleep; but, in fact, the animal's eyes were not entirely closed, and it was awake and alert, after the manner of its tribe. It was watching D'Artivan; but it neither moved nor uttered a sound.

At length, the two cages touched; they came together with a slight jar; and the leopard, which had been lying down in the position a sleeping hound assumes, raised its head, beat the floor with its tail and rose upon its four feet. Its green eyes were shimmering like two immense emeralds in the shadow in which it stood, and they were turned full upon the Gascon.

The latter also kept his gaze concentrated upon the monster's front; and when the cages were joined, he began to walk backward toward the lateral passage, until he reached the door by which he and his friend had entered. With his hand thrust behind him, he opened it, quickly passed out and closed it, locking it and withdrawing the key.

No sooner had D'Artivan disappeared, than the leopard began to utter a succession of low, whining sounds, and to manifest an uneasiness by sniffing the air, and rubbing its nose between the bars of the two cells. Then, suddenly bristling, and curving its back in a peculiar manner it slowly trotted to the farther end of the cage, crouched down upon its belly, and began to crawl toward the unconscious sleeper. When



it was within a foot of the bars it suddenly sprang upon its feet, with a shrill, hissing sound, and, lifting its terrible paw, armed with five talons as strong and sharp as the point of a steel poniard, the monster dashed it between the bars. It descended full upon the throat of the sleeper, and at the same instant a roar issued from its own which was heard by the under-keeper outside of the thick walls and a hundred yards away.

The under-keeper turned over on his side, smiled in his semi-sleep, and muttered:

“Aha, the tamer of beasts is there! I shall have the place.”

## CHAPTER XXVIII.

### DOCTOR SOUCHON.

On the night during which the strange and desperate scene we are about to describe was enacted the residence of Doctor Souchon was preternaturally dark. Not even a glimmer of light was visible through the chinks of the solid oaken shutters which hermetically sealed the gloomy and mould-stained walls. Nor was there a sound from within to denote that the house had so much as a mouse for an occupant.

But, silent and deserted as the doctor's abode appeared, this dearth of life and light was only apparent.

In a large upper room, which was almost destitute of furniture and resembling more the immense laboratory of an alchemist than anything else, three persons faced each other. One of these persons was the master of the house—the surgeon who had attended the wounded D'Artivan at the café of the Three Virgins; the second was Captain Felix Dumesnil; the third was—Victor D'Artivan.

In a dimly lighted room below, and which was filled with the massive and sombre furniture of the period, sat a young girl dressed in mourning, and kneeling at a bier in the centre of the apartment, upon which was stretched a headless body covered with a black pall. The long veil of the girl swept the heavy carpet; her figure was bowed over the breast of the corpse upon which her folded arms rested, and her white forehead rested upon her arms. She was weeping, not boisterously, but

silently. At short intervals a shudder convulsed her form, and a stifled sob escaped from her bosom.

At a quarter past midnight the three persons in the room above were enacting a most remarkable scene.

Half a dozen candles in sconces afforded an imperfect light, throwing outside of their radiance grotesque and shifting shadows.

At one end of this melancholy chamber knelt the murderer of Paul Cambray. His upturned face was ashen, even to the lips; its expression was that of the wildest terror. His eyes, distended and glittering, seemed straining to fly from their sockets. His writhing hands, raised to the level of his eyes, opened and closed continually, as if endeavoring by pantomime to convey what his dumb lips refused to pronounce.

In front of this man, towering over him like a priest of the Inquisition, stood the surgeon, Souchon. Robed in a black woollen gown shaped like a gaberdine and reaching to his slippered feet, his head covered with a skull cap of the same stuff and color, he appeared not unlike one of those Chaldean oracles who gave courage to the armies of Darius or inspired them with despair. His tall figure was more imposing in this strange garb, his austere features more grim and repellant. In his hand he held a small ebony cane, with the point of which he touched at intervals a button in a powerful battery which stood on a table at his side. At every such movement, D'Artivan uttered a scream of agony, while his body shook as with an ague, and not without reason.

A long copper wire, the ends of which were connected with the poles of the battery, formed a large loop at its center, and this loop encircled the neck of the Gascon. At every touch of the button, a current of electric fire darted along the wire, scorching his throat,

and leaving a white cicatrice around it. Three of these rings were already broadly defined above his velvet collar, which was pushed down, leaving his neck bare to the shoulders.

Behind the grim inquisitor stood the gigantic Dumesnil, with arms folded, and with his penetrating eyes fixed upon the face of the quivering victim. His stern features were immobile, rigid as the mask of Fate itself.

The silence in the chamber at that moment was frightful; it portended so much. Suddenly it was broken, for the fourth time:

“Confess!”

This one word, pronounced in a terrible undertone by the surgeon, was repeated for the fourth time. It had followed every appeal of D'Artivan for mercy. Then, silence again.

The murderer presented a pitiable appearance. His rich garments, soiled by the thick dust from the bare floor, and torn in many places by a struggle that had evidently taken place, seemed to mock his abject state and humble attitude. The sparkle of the jewels on his embroidered collar—Ferdean's jewels—was like that from the laughing eye of a devil gloating over his sufferings.

He was faint with terror, he was weak from the struggle in which he had been bent and twisted and thrown into a heap upon the oak boards of the floor by the Hercules who had seized him in the street and borne him into this house of doom. He would have fallen forward upon his face, but that the horrible necklace, instinct as it was with life, like a human hand held him upright, while it burned his flesh.

“Confess!”

Such was the command, uttered by the inexorable



voice that grew sterner with each repetition of the word.

"Oh, mercy, mercy!" shrieked the wretch, twining his long fingers together, unmindful of the bruises they received from the costly rings—Ferdean's rings, which glittered upon them.

The fearful wand was raised.

"Oh, God! Mercy—mercy! I did not mean to kill him!"

"He was your friend,"

The measured tones were hoarse, as they left the white, set lips of Dumesnil.

"Yes, yes," wailed the murderer; "but I did not mean to kill him, I tell you!"

Again spoke his inexorable judge:

"He was your friend; and he gave you his confidence."

"But I, I spent money upon him, I befriended him."

"Yes, that you might the more surely enmesh him. You enveigled him to his death; you assisted at or you caused his murder. He trusted you, and you betrayed him to his death."

"But I did not. It was he who proposed to go to Versailles, to enter the cage, to remain there all night. I could not dissuade him, and I remained awhile with him, and—and left him—left him all right."

"You hated him."

"Oh, it is true I was jealous of him, and he—he wronged me."

"He was your friend."

Again those ominous words, sad in their meaning, terrible in their tone.

"But she loved him, that Clarise—and he triumphed over me; and she—the little plebian—"

"Cease your babbling."

Dumesnil's voice was a reverberation; it shook the windows of the room. D'Artivan cringed, and was silent. His frivolous thoughts were instantly dissipated. His eyes wandered to the terrible instrument—the use and power of which had been taught to Souchon by the banished Mesmer, but was yet so little understood. It lay there, under its black velvet covering, like a living monster, obedient to the touch of its master.

Again the wand was raised, and a cry of ineffable anguish answered the signal.

“Confess, or die!”

The walls of the Gascon's ears seemed to crack with the sound of this frightful voice. To his quaking soul it was as the crash of thunder.

And then for a brief space he became a madman, oblivious to all save fear, that kind of fear which makes the veriest coward attempt what heroes would halt at.

With a movement of incredible swiftness, he suddenly thrust his fingers against his throat, forced them between it and the thick wire, and, although his hands were bound together at the wrists, succeeded in spreading the loop so as to admit the middle finger of each hand. Then, with a supreme effort of strength, he drew the coil upward. He had drawn his chin inward, and had succeeded in slipping the loop over it and as far as his mouth.

As the wire touched the murderer's lips there came from them a noise like the hissing of a serpent; a white and pungent vapor issued from them, followed by a shriek.

The surgeon had forestalled him!

This time D'Artivan had succumbed to nature—he had swooned. There was no difficulty, therefore, in replacing the wire; but his arms were now tied behind him. The surgeon produced a small vial from a medi-

cine case, poured a few drops of liquid from it upon the tongue of the unconscious man, and in a moment he opened his eyes wildly, and feebly cried:

"Do you intend, then, to murder me?"

The surgeon made no reply. Once more he resumed his station near the battery, wand in hand. And once more, without a word, without a glance at his ghastly suppliant, he stretched forth his arm, and touched the fatal button.

A last despairing scream quivered in the burning throat of the craven. He could bear no more. He held up his head, contorted his cracking lips in the effort to speak and mumbled, huskily:

"Hold, for Christ's sake, hold!"

This strange appeal in the name of One at whom all France seemed scoffing brought a smile to the surgeon's lips, a smile of derision.

"Will you confess?" asked he, moving his cane toward the button.

"Yes, yes," yelled the prisoner, frantically; "I will confess; only release me."

"Not yet," said Dumesnil, approaching the scarred wretch and looking sternly down upon him. Then, drawing from his capacious waistcoat pocket the identical wallet in which he had bestowed the bank-notes Paul had given him on the quay at Dover, he drew from it a folded paper.

Opening the paper, he read aloud:

"I, Victor D'Artivan, residing in the Faubourg St. Honore, Paris, in the presence of Doctor Alfred Souchon and Captain Felix Dumesnil, who will sign this paper in my presence, as witnesses, do hereby confess and state upon my corporal oath, without compulsion:

"First, that I inveigled Paul Cambray to enter the building at Versailles used for the confinement and exhi-

bition of wild animals; and that I there persuaded him to sleep in a cage which, after drugging him with liquor, I rolled against the cage of a leopard; and that the leopard tore out the throat of the said Paul Cambray, and devoured the head.

"Also, that I was directed to kill said Cambray by the Marquis of B——."

The remainder of the document was merely formal.

"Have you heard all that I have read?" inquired Dumesnil, after he had finished.

"Yes," replied the Gascon, sullenly.

"Then why did the Marquis of B—— command you to kill Paul Cambray?"

Dumesnil had until now remained singularly impassable; but as he put this question he exhibited an emotion which he could not entirely suppress. A film gathered before his eyes, and he spoke almost tremulously:

"The Marquis of B—— required me to put him out of the way by any means I might choose," answered D'Artivan, slowly; "and I wished to be revenged upon him, and another through him. He had discovered a secret of the Marquis's, which the latter would rather be buried alive with than have every one know. Some others, also," added the murderer, malignantly glaring at the Captain, "know too much for their safety."

"And this secret—do you know it?"

D'Artivan was silent; he looked sullenly at the floor.

"No matter," observed the Captain, with a sigh; "let us proceed. You will sign this paper with your full name, after which we will also sign it as witnesses. Unbind his hands, Doctor."

And while D'Artivan was being relieved from the ligature around his wrist, Dumesnil brought to him a pen and-inkhorn and a portable writing case which the Doctor usually carried.



In the unnerved condition in which D'Artivan's experience had left him, his task was necessarily a slow one. While he was engaged at it the most profound silence prevailed in the room, accentuated by the monotonous scratching of the quill in his stiff and bruised fingers. But once there came a slight shuffling sound, seemingly from the corridor, and close to the door. D'Artivan raised his head and listened. But the sound was not repeated, and he resumed his work.

At last he had finished. He had made each letter very large, and had made several attempts with his crippled fingers before he had succeeded in tracing his name legibly. Then the witnesses signed. D'Artivan was then freed from the collar of wire, and permitted to rise to his feet.

Moving stiffly across the chamber he picked up his hat, which had fallen upon the floor in his struggle, walked toward the door, and turned with a scowl of malignity as he reached it.

"Now that you are through with me," he snarled, "I suppose I am at liberty to leave this house?"

"Oh, do you really think that?" inquired Dumesnil, bitterly.

"Of course," quickly replied the Gascon, glancing uneasily at the giant, who was standing but a few feet from him, and the expression of whose face was that of a person who expects something to happen.

Dumesnil considered a moment, and answered:

"Well, yes, we are through with you—at least for the present. At the same time, do not forget that you are an assassin."

Then, elevating his voice, he called, sternly:

"Enter, my friends!"

The door was instantly thrown open from without, and two gens d'armes with muskets stalked into the

room. Advancing at once to D'Artivan, each one laid his left hand upon his shoulder, and said, brusquely:

"We want you, Monsieur!"

D'Artivan reeled for an instant as from a blow, a ghastly tint overspread his distorted face. But, recovering himself, he cried out, in accents of rage:

"Ah, devils, you have betrayed me!"

His eyes roved insanely about the apartment, as if seeking some opening besides the door which the surgeon had just closed. Two heavy curtains of red velvet were suspended across what appeared to be a little recess, at the farther end of the room. Toward this, with a half-formed hope, the murderer sprang, before the movement was suspected, and in a twinkling he disappeared behind the drapery.

"Mon Dieu, he is gone!" shouted the astonished Souchon, rushing toward the recess madly; and parting the curtains, he bent over a balustrade.

Dumesnil and the gens d'armes were at his side in a second, and all three stopped—at the landing of a narrow stairway which descended into some dark passage below.

Their eyes sought Souchon's. "Ah, yes!" cried he, and plunged down the stairs. The others hurried after him. At the bottom he turned to the left, pushed open a door and vanished. When the rest arrived at the spot, they found a door on either side of the bottom landing. They opened the one on the right, and stepped out into a court at the rear of which was a low wall. Dumesnil glanced at the wall, and muttered:

"The scoundrel has escaped."

At that instant, and while he was gloomily returning into the house, with the gens d'armes at his heels, there came to them the clamor of voices. The noise proceeded from the front of the house. Dumesnil threw open the door through which Souchon had passed, and the three

men found themselves in the room in which Clarise had sat watching the corpse of Paul Cambray. The first object upon which their eyes rested was D'Artivan. He was lying at full length upon his back, before the door leading into the front or main hall of the mansion. There was no movement of his body, and absolutely no color in his face.

But there were other occupants of the room who were not so passive. Clarise stood by the side of her chair, holding her black veil back from her pale and tear-stained face, and gazing stonily at the figure of her lover's murderer. Doctor Souchon, standing near Clarise, with his hand resting lightly on a little wooden knob protruding from the wall of the entry, was also gazing at D'Artivan; but as the others entered the room he moved away, saying, quietly:

"The knob of that door is copper metal, and a wire connects it with my battery. I was just in time to send a charge into him as he grasped the knob. Take your prisoner, my friends."

The gens d'armes were bewildered. They regarded the Doctor with an expression of fear.

"This man is the fiend himself!" whispered one to the other.

"Parbleu, ves," returned the other; "let us get out of here."

D'Artivan was opening his eyes. He rolled over on his side, and scrambled to his feet, looking confused and scared. The gens d'armes went up to him, again took him by the shoulders, and, shaking him roughly, said:

"Come you! It is only a few toises to the Conciergerie, and we are in a hurry."

And locking their arms is his, while Souchon opened the door (which they refused to touch), they disappeared with the prisoner down the corridor.

## CHAPTER XXIX.

### MIRABEAU'S VISIT.

The wonderful influence which Helene Sainte Maur had established over Mirabeau proceeded not merely from physical but psychical causes. The occult power of which we have heretofore spoken had been brought to bear upon the brain and mind of the great orator, to subserve a special purpose. The influence she thus acquired was not ephemeral; it remained with him even when he was absent from her, even while he was in the midst of those stormy combats which threatened perhaps his own ruin, and which ended, as much through the subtle exercise of her power as through any other medium, in the downfall or the annihilation of his adversaries.

It is the purpose of this chapter to explain the singular phenomenon, as Mirabeau's friends termed it when commenting upon the docility of this lion of the tribune in the presence of Helene Sainte Maur.

In revealing this secret of the boudoir of the great Parisienne who has been given so honorable a place in this historic story, we do not wish it to be understood that there was anything in the least culpable or even reprehensible in her purpose, or in the means by which she sought to accomplish it. This peculiar power which she possessed was never used by her for purposes of evil; it is even doubtful, indeed, if she would have been capable of exercising it nefariously. That it is a terrible power is conceded now by the scientific world; that he who possesses it may use it for evil, the author at least, is



gravely doubtful, having seen both operator and subjects a number of times during the exhibition of this wonderful psychological phenomenon, and given both the most searching scrutiny and study.

The last day of February was over. A black mountain had loomed up in the west, obscuring the setting sun and deepening the sullen twilight. Night had descended, but through its sombre shade the mountain still displayed to the east its frowning profile. This mountain had a voice, and as this voice issued from its eyrie it spread over the restless Capitol of Pluto, the Paris of yesterday, first with sighs, then with groans, and finally with a clamor at once deafening and appalling.

The mountain was a cloud, the voice was the wind. The two were about to hold a carnival, and the one with its threatening frown, the other with its warning moan, were driving the belated people off the streets.

At eight o'clock the Faubourg St. Germain was without an echo save the echoes of the wind. The meagre lamps at the corners of the streets drove the shadows toward the centres of the gloomy squares, where they solidified and remained impenetrable. The fierce gusts assailed the chimneys of the tall houses, and halloed down their sooty depths, twisted the trees and snapped their branches, and then scurried off down the deserted streets, like the gamins of St. Antoine, in search of more adventures. As its wrath increased the wind became more violent, and none but a giant in bulk and strength could have breasted it.

But precisely such a personage was just now entering the square at the south end of the Pont Archevique. He was enveloped in a long cloak, which the blast seemed determined to strip from his broad shoulders.

"Pardieu," muttered the man, as he muffled his face

with the ample folds for the fifteenth time, "folk lore has it that the devil is in the middle of every whirlwind. Well, peste, I believe it!"

At the corner of the boulevard he turned toward the left, strode along to the centre of the black shadows—which completely swallowed him up—and crossed to the other side of the avenue. Here he stopped; surveyed the facade of a spacious stone chateau whose windows emitted a golden light, ascended the broad steps, and sounded a bronze knocker.

The door was immediately opened; and, as the man entered the wide and glowing hall whose cheery mouth laughed into the night without for an instant, a charming voice cried:

"Ah, Monsieur Mirabeau, how did you get a fiacre on such a night as this?"

"Fiacre indeed," grumbled the visitor, as he removed his heavy cloak; "I rode on the devil's back."

"Oh, Heaven," murmured Clarise, for it was she, and the chateau was that of her mistress; "does the evil one then visit Paradise?" and Clarise looked at the colossus with a little shudder.

"What is that, midget?" demanded he, shaking his large frame with a loud cough.

"Ah, you have forgotten that you said to me the last time you came: 'Mon Dieu, Clarise, I have just come from Inferno, and here I am—in Paradise.'"

"True, true, my child," responded he, while he adjusted his cravat, ran his white fingers through his thick hair, and smiled at her, no longer ruffled either in temper or attire. "I meant the Assembly, that is Inferno. But I, I am not Lucifer. My mot was a bad one, I withdraw it. No, I ran away from the devil, and here I am—in Paradise, of course."

"Very well, Monsieur le Count; you have an answer

for everything," returned Clarise, with a pleasant nod of concession. Then she led him into a softly lighted boudoir, announcing, as she threw open the door:

"The Count Mirabeau, Mademoiselle."

Mirabeau advanced but two paces into the room and stood still.

What he saw was a vision. Scores of wax candles threw their mellow beams upon every object from marble and from bronze sconces, from silver brackets, candelabra and statuettes; costly paintings covered the walls over antique tapestry; the richly frescoed ceiling glowed with a harmony of tints; a sea-coal fire burned in a hollowed chimney rimmed with carven oak.

But the eyes of Mirabeau were not resting on any of these charming objects. Under his thick eyebrows they gleamed with all the eagerness of one who is permitted to gaze over the barred gates of Heaven. It was the fair sorceress he saw, she who had drawn him by the omnipotence of a glance from a night session of his colleagues; for whom he had disregarded three appointments with as many pretty bonbonnières. That very afternoon Helene had passed him in front of the Hotel de Ville, she in her phaeton and he rooted to the sidewalk gazing at her. She had drawn up to the curb, bowed to him and said:

"I shall expect you at my hotel at eight o'clock this evening. Do not fail to come."

Then her eyes had looked into his for a single instant, and she was gone.

He had thought of nothing else after that; and now he was here, in her presence, a votary at a shrine.

There she lay, upon a divan of blue velvet, gently waving a jeweled fan, her eyes half closed, a picture of cushioned indolence.

And while this lion contemplated the vision, he for-

got his triumphs, his dangers, his ambition and France.

And yet, only that day; in a battle of words, he had said:

"I belong only to my country. Let others seek alliances with her enemies; let others forget their pledges to the people, if they will; but I, Mirabeau, will denounce them and defy them."

Only that day he had stood between a gulf and a rock. In the morning he was at the brink of the gulf; at midday he had climbed the rock.

What a retrospect was his!

Standing there in the midst of that silken ease, mute in the presence of a woman, muffling his heart that it may not beat too loudly, we leave him for an hour to the soft influences of beauty and the preparation of a scene we are shortly to witness.

The colossal figure of this man had but just risen above the anarchic gloom. He had been made the leader in the National Assembly; he was the recognized champion of order. At that moment he was the arbiter of the fate of his party, if not of Paris.

But Mirabeau's power was not secure. He had quarreled with Robespierre, and Robespierre had been made public accuser in the courts. Robespierre was an accident, a phenomenon of the Revolution. He was a monster spawned by the putrid society of the French capital, that society which mistook the phosphorus on a corpse for the star of hope. Only a little while before it had mistaken the pedantic phrases of the Girondists for ideas; later on it would mistake anarchy for liberty.

Within the ill-shaped and puny body of Robespierre beat the heart of a tiger. Slaughter was his synonym for pleasure, and he reveled in it. It was his remedy for doubt, and he applied it; the guillotine cut all knots for him. This was his only mental resource; with the



guillotine he solved all problems. He was a coward by instinct; circumstances and opportunity made him a bully.

Robespierre was the natural enemy of Mirabeau, and even now he was plotting his death. But a greater reaper than Robespierre was afield, whetting the scythe of fate for the one, the knife of vengeance for the other.

All this was fact. Much of it Mirabeau knew, much of it he feared. And yet, as he stood there in the presence of Helene Sainte Maur, he forgot all, he feared nothing and hoped everything. Hope mounts upon success, and Mirabeau had been successful.

Mirabeau had made frequent visits to the chateau during that turbulent month of February, and every time he had issued from its doors his face had worn a bewildered expression, but at the same time a look of triumph.

Let us return now to the boudoir and penetrate this mystery.

## CHAPTER XXX.

### SECRETS OF THE BOUDOIR.

An antique clock on an onyx mantel shelf chimed the hour of ten. Utter silence pervaded the salon ; it was still bathed in the golden light of the wax candles. Their perfumed stems and the hot breath they exhaled had made the air languish.

The two occupants of the room were seated face to face ; she leaning forward in her chair, he sitting bolt upright and stiff in his. Her eyes were fixed upon Mirabeau's with a concentration of energy impossible to depict, to describe ; while he returned this powerful gaze with a questioning stare. Thus the two had remained for a full quarter of an hour.

Gradually, the stare of Mirabeau changed to an expression of vacuity ; the eyelids twitched, drooped, then became fixed ; the dilation of the pupils had also ceased and they had begun to contract. The motion of his body caused by his heavy breathing had subsided, and his whole form settled directly into a rigidity resembling death or profound coma.

The moment Mirabeau had reached this stage of the mesmeric state (for such it was), Helene rose quietly, paced the length of the room several times, and then, returning to him, for some minutes contemplated him.

Her attitude now was majestic. It was that of one endowed with supernatural power, with transcendent mental attributes. The expression of her face was that of a divinity before an awful penetralium.

The heart whose impulses she was about to direct, the soul whose secrets she was about to read, were the heart and soul of a man who was rapidly approaching national greatness; whose sonorous voice impulsed the hearts and stirred the souls of three-quarters of a million of his countrymen, and rang like a tocsin around the rim of France.

And this woman at this moment was the master of this great heart, of this great soul whose secret she was preparing to lay bare, whose will she was preparing to subdue to her own.

Of what use would she make of those secrets? How would she obtain them? To what end would she bend his will?

Let us wait.

“Mirabeau!”

This name, which thrilled all France, came from the scarlet lips as though breathed by the wind. The voice sounded distant, impressive; the tone of it was weird, commanding.

Mirabeau heard; his face, from which all color had receded, assumed the expression of an anxious listener, of one who waits for a command—that he may obey.

She came a step closer to him, and as she did so his eyes seemed to retreat from her. His hands rested rigidly on the cushioned arms of the chair in which he sat, and on one of them she laid one of her own, a fair and perfect hand and firm and steady as his had been. The contrast between the two was wonderful; it suggested the contact of a brown eagle and a snow-white dove.

But here the dove was master of the eagle.

And now, this luxurious chamber, with all its dainty appointments, suddenly became—without any material

change or transformation—an Inquisitorium; but its director was a beautiful woman.

“Mirabeau !”

Again she called him, and this time her voice was full and calm and measured. At the first sound of his name he had started, as though his soul had been called back from a distance. Now his eyelids quivered; but the eyes remained contracted, and without expression save that of uneasiness.

“Mirabeau, you are a strong man, but a weak one also.”

The massive bosom rose, and a sigh escaped through the parted lips, but nothing more.

“Yes, you are very weak. You trifle with your opportunities; you consume precious time in foolish amours, while your enemies spend theirs in plotting against France, and against you. At this moment there is a ballet dancer at the Faydeau gnawing her fan with vexation because you did not escort her to the play-house to-night, as you promised. She has often laughed at you behind that fan, although you gave it to her. In the Rue de la Chaussee d’Antin, looking up at your shaded windows, while she drives back and forth before your house, is the young widow of C——, whom you allowed to be sent to the block only a month ago. She is in the pay of Robespierre; and, besides, she hates you. But you had promised her this evening, and an empty loge awaits you two at the Lyrique. You admit all this, do you not?”

The colorless lips twitched, and Mirabeau answered, hesitatingly:

“Yes.”

Helene resumed:

“You spend money that you can not spare in buying seats at the Opera for worthless creatures (of whom I



have named only two; though, alas, they are many!), but you do not go there yourself because you have only desired to get them out of the way that you may enjoy yourself securely, in the society of Dulagrè's sister (another paid agent!) at the theatre first, and afterwards at the Restaurant Nouvelle. You admit this, also, do you not?"

Again the confession, hesitating and slow,

"It is true."

"You are, therefore, sensual—violently so. You are sentimental—foolishly so."

Mirabeau's chin sunk upon his breast, but he was silent.

"But, after all, you love!"

The massive head reared itself, in the manner it was often wont to do in the Assembly. A beam of light radiated the powerful features, and Mirabeau murmured faintly.

"I love you, only you—my God, yes!"

"But you brought sorrow to your wife, and she parted from you."

"I loved her not, nor she me. Besides, my family caused it all. It is passé, let it rest. I love you."

"You love me. Yes, that is true. Well, you wish that I should respect your love, do you not?"

"Ah-h! Why not?"

"Then you must cease your amours. I do not wish you, my friend, to waste your time, nay, risk your life, as you are certainly doing, by involving yourself with these frivolous and treacherous beings. Besides, do you not know that in this unhappy Paris one day is a year?"

Mirabeau groaned; his face became troubled.

"You feel this to be solemnly true, awfully true. Then—remember it."

An impressive silence followed. Helene regarded

him earnestly. Shadows were flitting over the homely face of Mirabeau, but his soul was distant. Her voice recalled it.

"Mirabeau, you are frightfully ambitious."

Mirabeau's features on the instant grew stern, the expression haughty and at the same time wistful.

"Well, you have succeeded in awing the pigmies; but you frighten your enemies, and that is dangerous. Do not frighten cowards too badly, it is not wise. Besides, these cowardly enemies are themselves ambitious also. You must therefore mount quickly; your progress is not rapid enough. It is true you have risen like a star; you must henceforth move like a comet. Do you comprehend all this?"

"Yes," responded he, with feverish intensity.

Another interval of silence, and then—

"What shall I do?" whispered Mirabeau.

Helene leaned over him; placed her face close to his, looked down into his shrinking eyes, and said:

"I will tell you. You must prepare to denounce the Assembly!"

A hoarse cry escaped the pale lips of the great leader. His form remained as rigid as ever; but the workings of his features betrayed the emotion he felt. His soul was being unveiled.

Helene continued. Her voice was coldly distinct, its tones concentrated. Her eyes, as she watched his face, were like diamond points.

"Listen carefully, and reflect. You have told me, again and again, that you love me."

"It is true, it is true," he muttered.

"Be silent. Others have told me that, and I did not believe them, or I did not care. But you, you are capable of loving, and you are capable of giving great

proofs of your love. Well, I shall exact them, do you hear?"

"Yes, yes, exact them," exclaimed Mirabeau, feverishly.

"And when you shall have given such proofs, I will reward you, with my love, if I can; and if my heart will not consent to that, then in a different but a noble way."

"How, how?" muttered he.

"Your ambition shall be satisfied."

"Ah, my ambition."

"Mirabeau, you call yourself a Republican. Well, you are not a Republican, my friend."

Mirabeau started violently, as though he had been suddenly betrayed.

"Your sympathies are with this poor Louis, and still more with his unfortunate Queen, whom France insults and Austria deserts. Well, they are prisoners, and they must be free—they are in the hands of regicides, and they must escape. There is but one man in all France able and willing to effect this. That man is Mirabeau."

"Ah-h!"

Mirabeau could utter nothing more than this; his emotions suffocated him.

"Yes, it is Mirabeau. And when this noble duty is performed, Europe will applaud you. You will be invited to every capital but one, and of that one you will be the master!"

"Ha! I do not understand."

"You shall be Prime Minister of France!"

"Ah—my dream!" cried Mirabeau, breathlessly.

His great frame began to shake now, and the muffled throbbings of his heart seemed to rend him within.

Helene resumed:

"The nobles of France, who left Paris after the fall of the Bastille and after the removal of the King and

Court from Versailles, have implored England and Austria to intervene and save the royal family. They have failed; but they have been promised succor for dying France, if the King comes to them. It is because of these promises that six hundred of these nobles are now stationed along the German frontier, and are waiting for the King to cross the border. Through me they look to you, Mirabeau, to bring or send him to them, and you must do it. Promise me that you will."

Helene had finished. Motionless she waited for his answer; and it was minutes before it came.

Mirabeau was undergoing a struggle with himself, a struggle concealed from every eye but God's. Each loud beat of his heart, terribly audible, followed the measured tick of the clock.

At last he spoke:

"It is enough. I will do it!"

The beautiful face that bent over him raised itself, and over it spread a halo that seemed borrowed from Heaven.

Gliding toward a small cabinet, Helene took from it a paper upon which some lines were written, glanced intently at them, then silently beckoned to Mirabeau, whose eyes had followed her as a slave follows a master. He rose from his chair at once, like an automaton, approached her, and stood passively at her side.

"Sign!" she commanded, placing the desk before him, and thrusting a pen into his hand.

With mechanical precision he did so; and the faint sound of the pen as it moved over the parchment was to Helene's ears like the whisper of Fate.

When she lifted the paper again, it bore in bold characters this name:

(Signed) "Gabriel Honore Mirabeau."



## CHAPTER XXXI.

“I LOVE THEE, AND—I LEAVE THEE.”

The last days of March were passing.

For a long time Mirabeau's labors had been superhuman, beyond the prolonged endurance of even his massive structure. They were rapidly drifting him on to death.

After he was made President of the National Assembly he worked at a prodigious rate. He was fond of seeing in the *Moniteur* the encomiums that even the Jacobins bestowed upon his admirable, bold and impartial management of that most difficult of all legislative bodies to control. But even fame pays a penalty—perhaps the greatest. Mirabeau's health began to give way, he was visibly failing. He had said to Helene:

“I am dying by inches; I am being consumed in a slow fire.”

“Could it be otherwise?” returned she. “You take no rest from seven in the morning until midnight. You expend twice as much in your hours of action as you recoup during your hours of repose, both of nerve and brain. You live too luxuriously and keep up a perpetual ebullition. Sometimes, recently, your sight has almost failed you. See, now, how your cheeks are scarified by the leeches you have applied to them to draw the blood away! It is all owing to your excesses.”

Mirabeau had pressed her hand and, with a tear starting in his eye, murmured, huskily:

“If I had only had such a mentor as you when I

was twenty!" and had hurried away from her to conceal a sob.

Yes, his life had been misspent; ruled forever by his passions, as it had been said by his warmest friend, he was a wreck at last.

One day, before starting to the Hotel de Ville, he bethought him of a question which had perplexed him the day before. Thomas Paine, the upstart American who had received favors from Louis XVI., and afterwards, when the King was about to be hurried away from Versailles to a prison in the Tuilleries, had read an inflammatory paper in the Assembly against his benefactor, had said to Mirabeau:

"Will you serve France as a republic?"

Mirabeau was not quick as a debater; and he had answered:

"To-morrow I will answer you."

Just now he remembered his promise, and he knew that the adventurer would remind him of it, with some sardonic allusion to his title of Count. He dragged himself to Helene's door to consult her. As he reached the steps he sank down on them in a swoon. He was taken into the house, and laid upon a couch. Restoratives were applied, and he revived. When he opened his eyes he saw Helene, and by her side Clarise, regarding him with mournful looks of pity and solicitude. His eyes brightened, and the color came slowly back into the homely but majestic face. He held out his hand; and as Helene took it with a kindly pressure of her own, he murmured:

"I love you—and—I leave you."

Then, in spite of remonstrances, entreaties and warnings, with which she tried to induce him to remain and rest, he staggered forth into the street, climbed into her carriage, which she had hastily summoned, and rode

straight to the Assembly. He had forgotten the question, but he remembered it at the last moment of his life, and then it was answered.

He addressed the Assembly very briefly; and then, with a faltering step, he left it and his enemies forever.

One week after this incident there was straw in the Chaussee d'Antin, in front of Mirabeau's house. Within the closed doors which had opened to the magnates of the Revolution so often the colossus of the tribune lay dying. The sunken features, the collapsed frame were but a spectral likeness of himself.

At his bedside, with a scared look on his face, knelt Cabanis, a young and inexperienced physician whom Mirabeau kept near him, for whom he had conceived a singular partiality and would not displace. But Cabanis could do nothing for his patron. Mirabeau had just made some communication to him; he rose and beckoning to a nurse, whispered a few words to her. The woman stifled a sob and left the chamber. The feverish eyes of the dying man followed her. As she disappeared, he seemed to sink into a reverie, in the midst of which his lips moved, and he murmured:

"The grave! ah, that is a junction where pride and humility lie down together."

An hour crept by, with no sound to divert his solemn reflections; then the muffled roll of wheels in the street dispelled them. His face became illumined. A light step came nearer and nearer to the door, and he muttered:

"She is here!"

Then the door opened softly and slowly, and Helene Sainte Maur entered, robed from head to foot in gray. She approached the bed, and, without speaking, took his hand. But he drew hers to his lips and pressed them against it with feverish eagerness. She did not

withdraw her hand, but bent over him tenderly, while her compassionate eyes seemed to flood his pallid features with a light not of earth.

"Mirabeau," she said, softly, "do you know your condition?"

"I am dying," replied he, with perfect calmness. And, after a moment's pause, he added, passionately:

"So is France."

"No," said Helene, "France is only bankrupt."

"Bankrupt, yes," assented Mirabeau; "but bankrupt in more than purse or credit. She is bankrupt in morals, in faith—above all, in men."

He stopped speaking, only that he might regain breath; and then he recommenced:

"Had I lived, I might have saved the Monarchy. Ah, I had forgotten what I went to you to ask, that day when I fell like a clod—which I shall be directly."

Then he repeated the question put to him by the infidel. Helene's eyes kindled.

"The Monarchy will pass away," she said, "and more than one form of government will follow it before France will know peace. But the crimes France is committing now will not be expiated within a century. Well, *on the hundredth anniversary of the murder of Louis XVI.—which his enemies are plotting, and, perhaps, may consummate—there will be another revolution in France!* Whether that revolution will be like this, a bloody one, or not, will depend, as it has in this case, on the financial state of the country. At least there will be a revolution, and it will be the last great retributive blow at France for the crimes she meditates to-day."

Mirabeau watched her inspired countenance, awed and silent. She appeared to him at that moment as an unreality, come to utter a terrible prophecy; and he believed it.



Helene now reverted to his condition:

"Do you regret leaving this troubled earth, my friend?" asked she, with a saint-like expression on her pure face.

"N-o," faltered Mirabeau. But suddenly his mind turned to the scenes he had left in the tumultuous Assembly.

"It is moving toward chaos," said he; "and it was I, I alone, who could have prevented anarchy. Yes," he went on, with growing excitement, "the Monarchy approaches an abyss. It must fall, and Robespierre will be Dictator of France.

"My friend," returned Helene, slowly emphasizing her speech, "Robespierre can never be anything more than he is—an incendiary and assassin. He will fall when the revolution ceases. No, you will have a different successor than that; one who will quell this fearful strife. But he will be a man of the sword."

"And this man?" demanded Mirabeau, breathlessly.

"Bonaparte."

"Ah," exclaimed the dying leader, "I see it now. Yes, you are right; that man's shadow has fallen upon everything. His very obscurity helps him on towards the place he covets. I have met him, conversed with him, marveled at what I saw in him. Yes, this Bonaparte will soon command the armies."

"He will be the master of France, at least," said Helene, solemnly.

But Mirabeau could speak no more; he scarcely heard this last and startling prophecy. His soul was passing while she uttered it. She saw it taking its still flight, and her tresses brushed his pale lips like the caress of a seraph's wing. Thrilled by this last joy, his glazing eyes flashed for an instant, and Mirabeau was no more.

Thus, consumed by internal fires, fell this Achilles, on the very threshold of the "reign of terror."

Mirabeau was a man of extraordinary versatility. Malasherbes said of him: "He can descend with the greatest facility into Inferno, and rise without effort to the brow of Olympus. He exists only on the one or in the other."

Necker had said: "He possesses those valuable traits which are necessary in a money-making journalist—he is never at a loss to construct fables, which he solemnly announces as truths."

Mirabeau's opinions of his own capabilities were overwhelming. It was said of him that if any one had offered him the elements of a Chinese Grammar, he would have attempted a treatise on the Chinese language.

He fondled the brains of men of talent, and set them to work for himself. He assimilated their ideas like a boa constrictor, and absorbed their energies like a sponge. But he was no idler himself; he worked with a sort of ferocity.

Mirabeau bore a bad reputation among the nobility, although he belonged to that order, and was fond of his title, which he bore even when no other titled person in Paris dared as much. His own family quarreled with him, accusing him with having plebian tastes. They were wrong, however, for he had decidedly "aristocratical tendencies." It was only from self-interest that he "affected Republican principles," something which he knew did not in fact at that time exist in France.

In private conversation he was amiable and engaging; invariably leading off with a topic which he knew would personally interest his company.

He had an unfortunate penchant for the society of actresses, and his amours with them were notorious.

He was imprisoned at Vincennes for three years; and

during that gloomy period he changed his "religion" three times. He was proud of his ugliness. He wore his hair like an enormous bush. Helene once asked him:

"Why do you endeavor to make your head appear larger than your body?"

"What," he replied, affecting surprise at her want of penetration; "do you not understand? Well, then, I will tell you; when I shake my terrible locks, no one dares to interrupt me."

Often when he called at the chateau, he would square himself before an immense mirror in the drawing-room, while waiting for Helene, and go through the motions of a speaker, beginning with—"The Count de Mirabeau will answer that question." And thus Helene would find him, often stopping on the threshold to watch and to listen in amused silence.

Mirabeau's valet de chambre, Teutch, had been a smuggler, and was said to have committed unheard-of deeds of daring and outlawry before he reformed. It amused Mirabeau, however, to kick and thump this terrible fellow, when irritated; and so accustomed did Teutch finally become to this rough usage that he really felt aggrieved if it was not administered.

But here, on the couch of death at last, lay all that was left of this eccentric genius; verily, a dead giant.

And while the great bell in the tower of Notre Dame sent its mighty throbs over weeping Paris, a woman in a gray serge robe stood over the rigid form, and mused aloud:

"I could have made you the greatest man in France!"

## CHAPTER XXXII.

### THE CAFÉ MILITAIRE.

One evening, about a fortnight previous to the death of Mirabeau, at one of the tables of the Café Militaire, a fashionable resort of officers whose means permitted the indulgence of an expensive cuisine, two young men of the National Guard were finishing their last bottle of wine. Had it been their first instead of their last, they would have noticed a stranger sitting at a table by himself at their left, and conveniently near enough to enable him to hear anything they might say. Indeed, the manner of this stranger, as well as his attitude, indicated that he was deliberately listening to their conversation, and that he had not listened long before he became profoundly interested in it.

This inquisitive person was none other than Gascoigne, the friend and factotum of the journalist Dudevaut until the latter's tragical death, when he became his successor in Robespierre's employ.

Gascoigne had sauntered into the café behind the officers, from the sheer impulse of habit, the habit which induces one of those hungry dogs which nobody owns to follow smelling at the heels of any passing wayfarer, possibly in the vague hope that some crumbs may fall from the man's pockets. Gascoigné, at least, hoped that the officers might drop something which would be useful to his master; and in this case he was not disappointed. Indeed, he was richly rewarded, after an hour's patient waiting.



The volubility of the officers had increased with each bottle they drank ; and by the time they began to discuss the third, every one except themselves and the attentive and patient Gascoigne had left the café. The sly journalist, never lacking in subterfuges, had called in a thick voice for a bottle of white wine. When it was brought he nodded over it in a way that would have deceived the shrewdest. All this time his large ears were doing the drinking while his lips scarcely touched the wine.

"Yes, yes," one of the officers was saying, "I tell you some queer things are going on ; things that the public knows nothing about. As for me, I manage to keep pretty well informed."

"Why, as to that," rejoined the other, not willing to appear as ignorant as "the public," and tossing off his glass with a gesture of self-complacency, "I can see through a mill-stone with a hole in it, myself. Apropos of news, do you know that Mirabeau is in a fair way to become the greatest man in France?"

"Indeed. Some people think he is that already," observed the first speaker, drily.

"Oh, yes, he has his devotees, certainly; but he will be Prime Minister. What do you say to that, eh?"

"Ah, that explains something," said the first, as if speaking to himself.

"Of what are you thinking?"

"Oh, of those secret conferences which Mirabeau holds with the Queen so frequently."

"Aha, you are then aware of those pretty meetings ; but of course you are, since every one in Paris knows all about them."

"True ; but I have just found out the meaning of them—that is, recently. Some weeks ago I had no opinion at all ; but, as I have remarked, things have

happened lately that are very interesting, and what you tell me of Mirabeau gives me the final clue."

"Powf! If you have only just found out the meaning of Mirabeau's visits to the Queen, you must have been deaf and blind. Any ass can understand them."

"Oh, you are wrong, my excellent friend, if you imagine that Mirabeau is in love with the Queen. No, nothing of the kind; they are the asses who say that he loves her, I tell you."

"The devil! Do you mean to say that he does not?"

"Precisely. Mirabeau is madly in love with that paragon of loveliness and virtue, Helene Sainte Maur."

"Ha, ha!" shouted the other, intensely amused at this statement; "imagine a lion changed into a donkey! That is exactly the metamorphosis you will see in Mirabeau's case. But are you sure of what you say?"

"Absolutely, I tell you."

"Then, how do you explain his visits to the Queen?"

"Will you swear that you will not divulge a word of what I tell you?"

"Mon Dieu! yes, since your manner says, 'prepare to be astounded.'"

"Well, listen:

"Mirabeau is now in constant communication with the Queen. The Queen has at last persuaded the King to act. He is to take her and the rest of his family to St. Cloud to spend Easter. Well, everything is arranged for a very different journey, I can assure you."

"What! do you mean to tell me that there is a plot to take the King out of France?"

"Wait. All the details are in my possession. This is the way of it:

"You know, do you not, that I was honored with an invitation to the reception given by Mademoiselle Sainte Maur—the last one?"

"Peste, yes, you lucky dog."

"Lucky in a double sense, as you will see directly. Well, I went alone; and, not being very well acquainted with those present, I was left to amuse myself by myself in the best way I could. *Sacre!* I was deucedly interested before I left the chateau."

"Ah, you must have seen Mirabeau making love to Mademoiselle, then?"

"Not at all. Wait. In the course of the evening I strayed into a little room which communicated by a door with what I suppose was a cabinet or study. The room I entered was crowded with pretty bijouterie, and I fell to examining and admiring the various articles. While I was thus pleasantly engaged, I heard two persons speaking in very earnest but subdued tones in the cabinet adjoining. I could not at first distinguish anything except 'mum-um, mum-um-um' and in fact had no idea that what they were saying could be of the remotest interest to me. I soon changed my mind about that, however.

"The voices after awhile became more animated; and I then made out that they belonged to Mademoiselle and a certain public man whom we both know."

"Come," ejaculated the listener, "let us have it all. I suspect his name; do not suppress it. It is—?"

"Well, yes; it was Mirabeau."

"Beauty and the Beast, again," laughed the other; "and I warrant me the Beast was braying."

"Parbleu, my friend, you are too much prejudiced against our great friend. He is neither a donkey nor a boor, to begin with. He is a diplomat, a courtier, a statesman, a journalist, a noble, an orator. He is a Knight of the Garter."

"Knight of the Garter, is he? Pshaw, any man who takes a spouse becomes that. But spare me any more

eulogies; and give me a chance to prove you are too partial. You know Mirabeau is an epicure. Well, one day I was at a dinner given by Lafayette, at which this great orator was present. The repast was ample, and Mirabeau had exhibited an astonishing appetite. When he could eat no more, the gourmet sighed, looked ruefully at the remains of the feast, and said:

“Ah, my mouth is much too small, my paunch much too contracted. Now, could I have taken more at a mouthful, and had greater capacity for the viands, then would I have dined as I should. As it is, pardieu, I’ve only tasted!”

“My dear fellow,” remarked the Count’s admirer, “it is only your good eaters who are good-natured.”

“I am silenced. Go on with your story. You heard Mirabeau, who loves, in a cabinet alone with the woman he loves, but he does not make love to her, va!”

“Nevertheless, all Paris is laughing at his infatuation in that quarter, whatever may be said by malicious persons concerning his supposed passion for the Queen. I confess that I expected, when I recognized the voices, to hear some very pretty phrases from him and some very fine mots from her, and, with nothing more than a mischievous feeling and a disposition to amuse myself, I stayed where I was.

“But, mon Dieu! The conversation which I now began to hear through that convenient door soon ceased to amuse me, it amazed me. I will repeat it to you; and I believe you will agree with me that I did well to listen, malgré good manners.”

The speaker then went on to narrate that portion of the discourse pertaining to the plan for the King’s flight which has already been told, and then continued, with an increase of vivacity:

“I became so lost to everything except the voices in



the next room, that at length I imprudently leaned against the door. In doing so my scabbard struck one of the bronze hinges, and produced a devil of a crash. The voices ceased instantly; then the door was roughly tried, shaken by a powerful hand, and evidently by a very angry individual. Fortunately it was locked, and I slipped out of the little room without being discovered."

"Sapristi!" ejaculated the listener, as the narrator finished; "this is certainly a fine piece of news. And have you disclosed the conspiracy?"

"The devil—no. Do you think I am such an ass? I am not malicious, either. Look here; I have a snug estate in Provence, as you know; and, although the Provençaux are considered by some people as a very rough and ill-mannered lot, they are not so bad to draw rents from. Well, do you not see? If this canaille of Paris retain the upper hand much longer I shall get no more rents, and my estate will not be worth a filip. In La Vendee they have stopped paying anything; in Normandy they have 'suspended.' Besides, I am for the Queen."

"And I also," returned the other officer, warmly. "To the devil with Robespierre."

"To the devil with Danton."

"Apropos of Danton, I heard an excellent story yesterday. It seems that Danton's sudden prominence has made him rather presumptuous. He had been paying very rapid court to Mademoiselle, and had come off with the same experience that every one else has. After receiving some wholesome advice from Mademoiselle, he was coming away from her door, looking excessively sour and gloomy. Mirabeau was just coming to make a call. Danton was exasperated. So bitter were his feelings at the moment that he thought it would be a

relief to tantalize his rival a little. Stopping on the pavement as Mirabeau came up, he observed:

“‘Well, Count, it is said there are positively no two things exactly alike, but there are two.’

“‘And those two?’ queried Mirabeau, unsuspectingly.

“‘Your experience and mine,’ returned Danton, and walked off before Mirabeau had time to recover.”

The wine having by this time been entirely absorbed, the officers went out of the café without noticing Gascoigne as they passed him, and he remained nodding in his seat until they had disappeared. Then, with a look of triumph on his saturnine face (for so it had become since his intimacy with Robespierre), he rose stealthily, paid his bill, and crept away.

In the interim between the night of Helene’s reception and the incident in the café, “Monsieur” (afterwards Louis XVIII.) had been conferred with, and had promised to assist in getting his brother, as well as himself, out of the country. The Queen had received a number of visits from Helene, and was, for the first time and the last, buoyantly cheerful.

Every preparation had been made. But the King, as usual, had proved the stumbling block in the way and refused to budge. He was importuned, and hesitated; was implored, and at last, when Mirabeau was dead, consented to go to St. Cloud to spend Easter, and to fly from there to the frontier.

Meantime, Robespierre had been informed by his minion of all that the latter had learned from the National Guardsman, and had determined upon a coup by taking the conspirators in the act. He had therefore made no sign, and Helene’s fears of a discovery had disappeared. The final change in the plan of the flight had thwarted Robespierre’s arrangements, and thrown him off the scent; but, like the vulture watching

the dying throes of a wounded stag, he hovered in the path and waited.

Easter Sunday dawned; but, if there was "joy in heaven," there was sadness in the palace. The King had taken pains to have it announced that the royal family would go to St. Cloud for the day. A royal avenue extended from the palace to the barriers, from the barriers to St. Cloud. But an excellent road also led beyond, and this the King's enemies knew as well as his friends. So, when a strong but light coach, with eight thoroughbred horses attached to it, was in the very act of receiving the royal excursionists, the bridle-bits were seized by the shrieking canaille, who swore, *pardieu*:

"The King shall not go!"

And the King and his party meekly turned back.

The King wore his sword at his side, and no doubt it was a good one. Still, he did not cut down the ruffian who thrust his body between him and the coach door. The generalissimo of the army was there with a strong and gallant escort, but the King did not call on these to clear the court-yard. Doubtless, he preferred to die in the shambles, as he did later on.

It was Sir Philip who told Helene of this miserable fiasco. He had been with the escort, prepared to follow the royal coach, and his brothers were already off with Dumesnil and the sturdy valets, for St. Cloud.

When Helene had heard Sir Philip through, she said:

"We must make one more effort; but we must treat the King as we treat the little dauphin; we must take him along."

## CHAPTER XXXIII.

### PLACE DU CARROUSEL.

It was nearly midnight of the 20th of June.

Near the Carrousel, in the Rue de l'Echelle, the shadows were thick ; but they did not hide the glass coach which waited there, close to the outer gate of the Tuileries.

Presently several persons successively and without noise emerged from the Carrousel into the street and entered the coach.

Still the coach waited. Evidently there were others to come. Directly there is heard the roll of rapid wheels, and the carriage of General Lafayette appears. Under the inner arch of the Carrousel it passes a young lady, who shrinks against the wall, with a shiver. One of the King's bodyguards is standing near her, dressed in a servant's livery. The young woman is the Queen. Confused and alarmed by the sight of the carriage of the commander-in-chief, she turns the wrong way with her escort, and in trying to find the coach she wanders away from it off into the Rue de Bac.

There is a count on the box of the coach, and as he sits there motionless, but trembling, the hour of midnight tolls.

An hour of waiting and then the Queen and her escort arrive, breathless and agitated. She enters, he mounts to the side of the coachman, and the latter touches his horses. They flit through the silent night, over the silent streets, to the barrier of St. Martin, and stop.



There a new berlin, of enormous size, with six horses, takes the fugitives, and the coach turns back. Count F—— mounts again, and the bodyguard also.

The whip is given to the horses, and they plunge forward; but the berlin is extremely heavy, and drags at the heels of the stout Norman horses. At length it enters the wood of Bondy, and is swallowed from view.

In the midst of the wood the fugitives were joined by an armed escort of seven mounted men armed with swords and pistols. This was Sir Philip Belmore and his party.

Sir Philip rode up to the berlin, bent in his saddle, and asked:

“Is his Majesty inside?”

A head, in a round hat and peruke, the head-dress of a valet, thrust itself out of the window, and answered in a low tone:

“I am here.”

It was the voice of the King.

“And the Queen?” anxiously pursued Belmore.

“The Queen is also here, and the children,” was the response.

“All is well, then,” said Sir Philip. “And now, your Majesty, I have to inform you that there are six besides myself, who will ride with the coach; and that there is a mounted guard in front and another at the rear, which will remain within hearing of the wheels, but out of sight until we enter Lorraine. Let us move forward, now, as rapidly as possible.”

The berlin was again in motion, the close escort divided, four riding on one side, and three on the other. Thus they proceeded, until they entered the wood of Fontainebleau. The horses had been changed at the Grande Cerf, and the party had gone some few hundred yards from the inn, when a great commotion arose

there, the sound of which was borne to those in the berlin. The King looked out of the window, and inquired the cause. At that moment Sir Philip galloped to the side of the coach and said, hurriedly:

"Pardon me, your Majesty, if I beg that for the next half-hour you will not appear at the coach window or allow any one to put up the blinds. No matter what you may hear, understand that I will come to you at the proper moment." Then he rode off rapidly into the darkness. The berlin kept on; but the noise coming from the direction of the inn increased; it seemed to the anxious travelers as if they were being pursued by an angry crowd of people.

Suddenly the voice of Sir Philip Belmore exploded in the darkness like the bursting of a shell—

"Halt!"

There was a quick reply in most uncouth tones:

"Oh, we intended to halt, Monsieur. Yes, *sacre*, we intended to halt as soon as we came up to you, because we have some questions to put to you, *la*."

"Well, fellow, although you are acting strangely, I have a curiosity to know what questions you can desire to put to me, a stranger. Out with them, sir."

"Good. We wish to know, these honest burghers and myself, who you are guarding so well in that fine new berlin? Some great aristocrats, no doubt, who should be kept at home to help feed Mother Guillotine, eh?"

The night was dark, but through the obscurity the figures of ten or twelve men could be seen, clustering around the little cavalcade which had drawn up at one side of the coach.

Sir Philip considered for a brief space, and answered, resolutely:

"Your question is impertinent, and it is excessively

foolish. If you have run all the way from the post-house, with your staves and what not, only for the purpose of insisting upon our introducing ourselves to you, you have had your trouble for nothing."

An angry murmur arose in the crowd, and a number of muskets suddenly appeared. Sir Philip rapidly whispered to Dumesnil:

"They are too far away from the town now to be heard, unless they should fire those muskets. We must capture the guns at once, if they will not allow us to go in peace; and then we must secure ourselves as we best can against any immediate alarm they might be able to give."

Dumesnil nodded, and, without replying, quietly got down from his horse, giving the reins to Hubert Melt-ham, and walked directly into the crowd of villagers. The man who had addressed Sir Philip was in the act of replying, when he was seized by the collar of his shirt by Dumesnil, who at the same instant grasped another of the meddlers in the same manner, and before either of them could cry out had dragged them outside of the throng. Both of these fellows had guns, which they spasmodically held while being captured.

"Guppy!" called the Captain, as he tossed the petrified prisoners together against a tree; "come and take care of the arsenal."

The valet dropped from his horse, and pounced upon the muskets in an instant, while Dumesnil caught two more of the amazed rabble in his arms, and bore them to the spot where he had left the first, whom Guppy was vigilantly guarding, and tossed them down in the same uncereemonious manner. Then, turning to the others, who were recovering from their astonishment, he growled, fiercely:

"Here, attention, you scoundrels! You see that I

have taken two of you at a time, and that I am inclined to take two more of you. Well, do you wish to know what we want six men for? I will tell you. In that berlin yonder is our great master, Mesmer, of whom you have heard. Even now, as he travels, he is at work on a human subject. It is only his enemies that he experiments on; and ye are his enemies! Well, he has only to look at you, do you understand, to turn you into anything he chooses to make of you. Come, then, which of you shall I now take?"

And with his great arms outspread, and his great eyes distended until he presented a frightful appearance to the superstitious villagers, he advanced toward them through the darkness.

But the villagers shrank back from him in terror. The four men he had captured, seeing their companions, as they believed, on the point of deserting them, began to cry out, in tones of reproach and fear:

"Holy Saints, are you going to leave us with Satan, then? Stay, stay, cowards—no, neighbors. Let us parley with this terrible person! Sir, sir, we were wrong to meddle with you; we do not want to have anything to do with the wizard who is inside there. Only let us go home, that is all we ask of you, and go your way—to the devil if you like, since you have the devil's partner with you!"

"Let me consider. Well, I agree to let you off, provided you leave us your guns. We do not like this night travel; but our master always travels by night, and rests during the day. Put down your guns, then, and be off with you, before he looks out. If he does that, morbleu, you are lost men!"

As he concluded this speech, Dumesnil walked up to another of the now completely cowed villagers and gently relieved him of his musket; the two valets, who



had slid from their horses, came forward and took the three others that remained in the hands of the rabble, and carried them to the booth of the berlin. Then, remounting his charger, and bidding the servants do likewise, Dumesnil motioned the coachman to start up.

The villagers had already grouped themselves together, and, with many whisperings and grumblings, turned their faces toward the town, while the fugitives slowly moved in the opposite direction.

On through Nemours and Fontenay, which lay in utter darkness, not a light visible ; then into Montargis, where the sleepy postillions changed horses at the post-house La Madaleine in twelve minutes. Then, without stopping, until they reached, in the broad and unwelcome glare of day, the little hamlet of Briare, on the Loire. At the Chapeau Rouge inn there was a small knot of villagers which gathered around the gaily-painted coach with goggling eyes and prying questions, but they were answered curtly, and in ten minutes, with six fresh horses, the coach was lumbering on toward La Charite, over whose long stone bridge it rattled thunderously; the escort, far in front and behind, beginning to be painfully anxious because of its slow progress.

Another stop at Nevers, and after passing through four other post-towns Moulins was gained. This was the capital of the Bourbonnois ; and here ended the fine, firm and smooth Bourbonnois road. The Lion d'Or inn was crowded with people, within and without, as the fugitives approached, and no change was made there, but the jaded horses were rested for five minutes behind the convent of the Chartreux, and then they moved heavily on toward the next—and the last post they were to be permitted to reach.

All the calculations of the friends of the King, who

had been stationed for many hours along the route through Lorraine to Metz, had miscarried in the important matter of time. When the berlin arrived at Varennes it was but seventy miles from Paris, and it was ten o'clock on the second night of the flight!

This little village of Varennes, miserable, shabby, grass-grown and dirty, was for once in its puny existence to hear its fatal name sounded throughout all France.

It was here that the King was stopped; here that the pursurers came up with the fugitives, and turned them back, sickened in heart, wearied in body. The terrible journey back to Paris, and through the street throngs who gathered in tens of thousands to smirk and glower at the royal prisoners, was an eternity to Marie Antoinette. And when she was conducted to her chamber she fell into a swoon that lasted for many hours.

Paris was jubilant, and the orgies that followed in the brothels and houses of carrousse on that terrible night of the return were worthy of the demon populace which was then preparing to immortalize itself on the altar of Infamy.

## CHAPTER XXXIV.

### THE MOB AT THE TUILLERIES.

The summer of 1792 was passing. It had yielded to the Queen of France nothing but bitterness. Many months of captivity had changed her greatly. All the brightness had gone from her face, all the lightness from her nature. She had grown profoundly melancholy, sternly sorrowful, made so by the misfortunes that had befallen her, and by the contemplation of those that threatened her. She did not spend her time in tears.

"Tears would often be a relief to me," she said, to Helene; "but when I feel them welling up from my heart I suddenly see with horrible vividness the outrages that have been perpetrated against me by this nation of butchers, and it seems too puerile to weep."

Her grief did not display itself in the manner that would most have pleased the women around her; and they added to the other charges which their shallow and vicious minds concocted, the charge of heartlessness. But the edge of grief, when it is prolonged, becomes blunted, just as pain becomes dulled by its own poignancy; and with Marie Antoinette sorrow became a hopeless calm.

New complications had been discovered by the Assembly and, as usual, it was unable to cope with the exigency that arose. For two years the populace of Paris, and largely the inhabitants of the provinces, had been occupying their time in marauding, looting, spying upon each other, and killing. A bread famine was

again the consequence of crime. Bread was six sous a pound, and among the populace of the bankrupt "government" sous were as scarce as charity. The mob revolted. It started up from its bloody lair and shrieked:

"Kill the Austrian woman! It is she who has brought the war with Austria upon us. To the Tuilleries! To the Tuilleries!"

A crisis, in fact, had arrived; the tocsin had sounded. The wolves of St. Antoine and St. Marceau had left their dens; they had come together, these two streams of tatterdemalions and assassins; they had mingled their cries, their oaths, their revengeful threats, and they shouted in unison:

"Marchez!" and, in a tangled and reeking line, they rushed to the Tuilleries after the stupid and unheroic Louis again.

There they forced the King to go to the Assembly, and proceeded with the real object of their assault upon the palace—the massacre of the soldiers and friends of the dethroned King, and the destruction of whatever they could stop to demolish.

Helene was with the Queen during this onslaught; and went with her to the Hotel de Ville.

Marie Antoinette had set her foot for the last time in the Palace of the Tuilleries. A few days of torture while shut up in three small chambers, and then the royal family was conducted to the Prison of the Temple. This was the last step before annihilation.

All the foreign ambassadors now applied for their passports, and left France indignant and disgusted.

Before the end of another month, even Lafayette was compelled to fly to Holland, to save his life from the cut-throats at Sedan. Having driven this illustrious citizen out of the army, the Assembly gave it to Dum-



ouriez later, who, in his turn, subsequently turned it over to the Austrians, and abandoned France to its fate.

The caprices of the populace became more and more insane, inconsistent. The author of "Figaro," whom a little while before they had compelled the King to exhibit with his rank production in a royal drawing-room, was now hunted by his former admirers through a dozen streets and byways. Like a rat, he tried to burrow; but he could not find a hole as easily as he could an epigram, and he was caught. He was afterwards let go, and crept off to England, a pauper.

The seven prisons of Paris were packed with "aristocrats," that is to say, with citizens who had clean skins. At night, the only sounds that wakened the echoes on the routes between the prisons and the Place Louis XV. came from the rolling tumbrils, as they bore the doomed to the axe, or carted the dead to the fields.

So far, France had been trying to exist without law. But of late two things had proved its impossibility: the massacres and the invasion of the country.

The Commune was now master of Paris; and it felt the necessity of action. Danton had borrowed from Mirabeau a phrase (dressed a little differently) which he had flung at his colleagues:

"We must dare, and again dare, and forever dare."

To illustrate his idea of daring, he suggested that the King be beheaded. This was popular; it made the mob forget for the time that its stomach was empty; and it had often shown that it loved blood better than bread.

Louis, therefore, was "tried," condemned, and in January following he was taken to the block. He mounted the car without emotion, passed through the gathering thousands, now hushed into silence, who had come to

see a king die. The ground of the Place Louis XV. drank his blood; and afterwards the assassins rechristened it "Place de la Concorde." Rather should it be named Place de la Mort!

Then England and Spain declared war against France, and the emissaries of the Jacobins began to hunt for Englishmen. Dumesnil came to Sir Philip to warn him that the lives of himself and his brothers would surely be taken if they were once inside of a French prison. A consultation was held at the chateau, and Dumesnil recommended the Catacombs as the safest retreat possible at the time. He had been in them and knew something of their intricacies; he could guide them—his three friends—to the most habitable spot in those gloomy regions, and the means of subsistence could be provided without much difficulty.

This plan was finally adopted, Dumesnil pledging his word that if danger befell Helene beyond the danger of the present he was to hasten to the Catacombs for Sir Philip. With many admonitions, which the latter left with Helene, he bade her farewell. It was late at night when he parted from her, the hour fixed by Dumesnil being midnight; and, with this indispensable friend and guide, the three brothers went sadly to their hiding-place, to which hundreds of hunted citizens had preceded them.

The three valets had accompanied their masters into their place of concealment; it being deemed utter madness to attempt at the outset of the English invasion to cross Frankish territory toward the border.

Helene's visits to the Queen continued; but they were now soon to terminate. The struggle between the Girondists had culminated in the triumph of the latter, and on the second day of June all the Girondists who could be found were arrested. Two of them were spend-

ing the evening at the St. Maur chateau, Brissot and Vergniaud, when the gens d'armes entered, pushing their way silently between the affrighted servants, and seized the intrepid statesmen.

On that day the "reign of terror" was to date its beginning in history. Indiscriminate slaughter then began, and continued for a year, at the end of which the master of Paris, Robespierre, was led to the block.

The event of June put an end to Helene's privileged entrance to the Temple. On the day following, Danton came to warn her that she was being watched.

"On no account whatever," said he, "must you leave your hotel. Two of my attaches are domiciled over the way, with orders to keep a vigilant guard over your entrances, and to send me word if any intrusion is attempted. But I can not prevent your arrest away from here. Do not try, therefore, to evade what I can not prevent."

When he left her she sank into a chair and buried her face in her hands. She remained in this attitude for hours; and when Clarise, who had come to look at her a score of times and retreated as many, finally roused her, she lifted to the light a face that was ghastly and full of anguish.

Clarise was now the only companionable person to whom Helene could turn. Madame Roland, her intimate friend, had gone to the guillotine; and Helene's intimacy with the Queen had driven from her every other so-called friend of her own sex, not from dislike or repulsion, but through fear that they might be compromised by visiting her. But one evening, in the middle of September, she sent Clarise to Danton to learn the condition of the Queen, and the girl did not return. Helene sat in her boudoir until nine o'clock waiting, until she became seriously alarmed, and summoned a

servant, the footman, whom she directed to go to the Minister's and request Monsieur or "Citizen" Danton to come to her. When Danton appeared she told him of Clarise's disappearance. He shook his head gravely.

"The girl came to me," he said, "three hours ago. I told her the Queen was comfortable and quiet. She left at once, presumably to return to you. Few are ever heard of now, after they once pass out of sight. Still, she shall be searched for. Although I am no longer Minister of Justice, I relinquished the office, not the power. I will use the best means at hand to find your Clarise or—"

Danton was going to add, "her grave," but he was checked by the deep distress depicted in the face of the woman he passionately, if hopelessly, loved; and he took his departure, leaving behind him a few words of comfort.

The next morning Helene received a visit from a stranger, who handed her a letter from Danton. The letter said:

"I send you Duroc, the Detective. He was at the Prefecture in service, during the time young Cambray was employed there, and remembers him. Give him particulars, and trust him implicitly. He is in my service."

Duroc was a small man, with a dark thin face, a beak-like nose, deep-set, watchful eyes that were brown and bright, and hair as black and straight as an Indian's. Helene motioned him to a seat, and was on the point of speaking, when he anticipated her:

"You know my business with you, Mademoiselle," he began, in a pleasant and respectful tone, "and I will tell you at once what is necessary for me to know, in order that I may serve you."



"You will be good enough, then, to state the full name of your maid, her age, height, build, complexion, color of eyes, color of hair and its length, and if worn long or short, in coif or otherwise; also, her habits, and where she resorted to for amusement or otherwise; also, whether or not she had a lover, and, if so, his name, character, residence, business, and address at home and at business place. Also, if you have any picture or likeness of the girl."

This astonishing list of questions, thus condensed into one, Duroc propounded in a rapid, precise and business-like manner, which at once inspired Helene with confidence. She immediately entered into a detailed statement, to which Duroc listened with the liveliest interest, and portions of which he noted down in writing. When he rose to take his leave, he said:

"I am splendidly equipped; and I have a great deal of confidence in undertaking the case."

"Ah, you give me encouragement, indeed," responded Helene. Then, taking from her cabinet a purse, she placed it in Duroc's hand, and observed:

"You will need money for expenses, and I do not wish you to advance it. Here are one hundred Louis."

Duroc received the purse as if it was a simple matter of course, and said, as he bowed himself out of the room:

"In three days I will see you here, Mademoiselle. Shall it be at this hour?"

"At this hour, if you choose," replied Helene.

As the detective walked into the Rue de Colombier, he slapped himself on the knee, and said, aloud;

"Aha, I think I shall look up my Gascon."

## CHAPTER XXXV.

### TRACKED.

In the year 1793, there were in Paris two hotels bearing the same name—"Hotel d'Angleterre." One of them was situated in the Rue de Colombier, Faubourg St. Germain, while the other was in the northwestern part, Rue St. Honore, in the Faubourg St. Honore. Persons and letters directed to either of these hotels sometimes went to the wrong one; and, as both of them were popular places, and needed no recommendation from each other, there was a mild feud between the two.

It so happened that Duroc was one day peering into the prison of the Conciergerie, in search of a prisoner who could give him some desirable information, when he espied D'Artivan, who was confined there on a charge of murder. Duroc was permitted to converse with the Gascon, and the latter, believing he was doomed to die, had poured his story into the detective's ears, interjected with many vicious expressions of hatred against Clarise Dechamp, upon whom he now charged all his misfortunes.

"Thousand devils," he said, grinding his teeth desperately; "if I could only get out of here long enough, I would cut her throat, curse her!"

D'Artivan had, during his savage recital, mentioned that he had secured lodgings in the hotel just mentioned, in Colombier street, in order to be convenient to Paul Cambray, whose lodgings were in the Rue Jacob, and that he had used his rooms at the hotel only

because he did not wish Paul to know his real place of residence. Duroc had paid no attention at the time to this piece of information; but, as D'Artivan had also mentioned that he had not given up his rooms there, and should go back to them if he was let out of prison, it now occurred to the detective that it would be as well to make some inquiries there. As yet, he knew nothing of the existence of the other hotel in the Faubourg St. Honore. He was, however, acquainted with the landlord of the first-named hostelry, and he felt confident that the latter would be able to give him some useful information. He was, to all appearances, repaid for his visit, judging from the satisfied expression of his keen face as he emerged, an hour later, from the hotel; but, instead of going home, he hailed a fiacre and directed the driver to the hotel in the Rue St. Honore. It was four o'clock in the afternoon when the fiacre stopped at the entrance; and, ordering the driver to wait for him, Duroc entered briskly, remained but a few minutes, and, coming out with a smile on his face, sprang into the hack and returned to his own quarters in the Rue St. Eustache.

Three days after his interview with Helene, the detective again called at the chateau.

Helene received him in the boudoir, and, before he had seated himself, said:

"You have some news."

Duroc smiled complacently. Taking from his pocket a gold chain, to which was attached a little gold vinaigrette, such as were suspended from the wrist, he delivered it to Helene, who uttered a cry as she took it.

"Where—where did you obtain this?" she demanded, turning pale with apprehension of something terrible.

"You can identify it, then?" said Duroc, postponing his answer.

"Yes, certainly, it was Clarise's! I gave it to her. Where did you find it?"

"In the possession of a fellow by the name of Victor D'Artivan."

"What!" exclaimed Helene, rising from her chair, and staring at the detective in astonishment; "do you say D'Artivan?"

"Yes, Mademoiselle, I—"

"But D'Artivan is dead?" asserted she, vehemently, as she continued to stare at him.

"No, Mademoiselle, he is very much alive," returned he.

"But I do not understand."

"If Mademoiselle will permit me to explain," observed Duroc, politely.

"Ah, yes, I am so greatly agitated and astonished that I am wasting time," apologized Helene, with a sigh, re-seating herself. "Pray go on, and tell me everything unreservedly."

Duroc bowed.

"To relieve your curiosity first of all," began he, "I must tell you that this Gascon was the accomplice of a titled gentleman by the name—"

"You mean the Marquis of B——," suggested Helene, as Duroc stopped.

"Ah, you knew that much?" observed he, with some surprise. "Very well. You, perhaps, know also that Robespierre has for this Marquis a deadly hatred; that he has persistently hunted for him for several years, in order to be revenged upon him for some gross affront of a personal character, of which I know nothing. When D'Artivan went to prison for the murder of the young man, Cambray, he sent a communication to Robespierre, which brought the latter to the Conciergerie, in spite of his well-known repugnance to visit



that prison, about which he has a singular superstition. He went into D'Artivan's cell, stayed there alone for a half-hour, and when he came out he said to D'Artivan, who had followed him with a very eager look in his eyes:

"You will be brought out to-morrow morning."

"The next morning two gens d'armes took D'Artivan in a carriage, with the blinds drawn, to Robespierre's private rooms in the Rue Guenegaud, to which no one ever goes except by his express direction or permission. When D'Artivan came out he went off alone. He was in a great hurry to get out of the neighborhood of the Quai de Conti, for some reason or other. He soon got into a fiacre and was driven at a tremendous rate to the Hotel d'Angleterre, in the Rue du Colombier. There he told the landlord that he should be there for one night only, and to say nothing of his having returned. He went to his room, seized his chest and dragged it down the stairs without waiting for a porter, and ordered the driver of the fiacre to place it on the vehicle. Then he jumped in and rattled away. But in his excitement he had said nothing to the landlord of the rent which he owed, and the latter thought it prudent to have the fiacre followed, and thus to ascertain where he went with his luggage. The fiacre was followed to the other Hotel d'Angleterre in the Rue St. Honore, where it was taken off (I mean the luggage) and carried into the hotel, and the fiacre drove away.

"All this I learned without much trouble, and, as soon as I had these facts in my possession, I went to the hotel in the Rue St. Honore myself. A little ingenuity elicited the fact there that two strangers, one of them with a bad scar on his left cheek, were in the habit of holding a viz-a-viz convention of an hour or two in the apartments of the latter every night. I was convinced that I had found D'Artivan; and with an injunc-

tion upon the landlord, which I gave him in the name of Danton, and which he would, therefore be certain to remember, I engaged a room adjoining my Gascon's. Two nights spent in my room yielded me this much in the way of discovery:

"At ten o'clock precisely, on the first night, the two entered together. I placed my ear to the keyhole, and heard enough to reveal to me that D'Artivan had gained his liberty from Robespierre by disclosing the secret of the other's presence in Paris; that as soon as he was free he had hurried to the house in the Faubourg St. Honore, and apprised the Marquis, who had, of course, vanished before the gens d'armes came there to search for him. The Marquis and D'Artivan were now in partial disguise, and domiciled at the little hotel in the neighborhood.

"The second night, I overheard the two discussing a plan they had in view to escape out of Paris.

"Last night they did not come at the usual hour. I was at the keyhole, and waited until eleven, but no use, they did not come. At twelve, I made up my mind to obtain an entrance into the room, and, having had some experience in opening doors, it was not long before I was standing in the middle of the chamber. There was a small casket of very curious appearance on a table in the room, and I took it up to examine it. As I did so, I discovered that the key had been turned in it without in fact locking it. Upon opening it, I found nothing in it but this locket. But this, I think, is a great deal."

"Assuredly, yes. It must be this wretched being who has caused me to lose Clarise," said Helene; "but what can he have done with her?" she asked, with a shudder.

"It is useless to speculate upon that," remarked Duroc; "we must try and find her."

"But will you not at once procure D'Artivan's arrest?" asked Helene.

"Two men are now in the room I took in the hotel, or, at least, were left there by myself, and if D'Artivan and the Marquis, or either of them, appeared since I came away the arrest has been made. Do not be discouraged; we are already on the track of the abductor, and we shall get him."

"Then you do not think that he has murdered her?"

"No. I believe she has been carried off for the gratification of a less summary revenge," said Duroc, rising to go.

"And what are you about to do now?"

"I shall now return to the Rue St. Honore. Expect me again at any hour."

Duroc left the house and returned to the hotel. He found both his men there, who reported that no one had entered the apartments adjoining during his absence.

"Very well," said he, "we will remain here."

It was now the usual hour for dinner, and one of the men was sent down to order plates for the three, to be laid in the room they occupied. When the meal was spread out before them they ate it in silence, and after finishing they ordered the remains to be removed and settled themselves comfortably for a possible and, they hoped, profitable vigil of five hours.

The twilight came on, the shadows thickened in the corners of the room, and still the three men sat near the door of D'Artivan's apartments, silently listening. On the table before them lay three loaded pistols, the only weapons they had brought.

The night was more than an hour old, and they were sitting in absolute darkness, when they heard footsteps in the passage without, then a key inserted in the lock

of the Gascon' door, and a moment after the sound of voices and rays of light came through the keyhole.

"Now, be ready," whispered Duroc to his companions, who grasped their pistols and rose, as did Duroc also.

The three men then advanced to the entrance, softly opened their own door, and glided into the hall, at the moment they heard the key turned in the lock by D'Artivan.



## CHAPTER XXXVI.

### FACE TO FACE.

Duroc had thus far taken all the precautions he had supposed necessary to prevent the game from suspecting they were discovered, and to ensure their capture. He thought, now that he had the Marquis and D'Artivan penned in their room, that, even if they attempted resistance, he and his stout assistants, with three good pistols in their hands, could certainly overcome the two. There was one precaution, however, which Duroc neglected.

Directing his companions to keep close at his back and follow him into the room if he was admitted, Duroc stepped quietly to the door and boldly knocked.

A voice inside asked:

"Who is there?"

"It is I, Thorpe, the landlord," answered Duroc, in an excellent imitation of that functionary's voice.

"Well, we are busy," called D'Artivan, whose voice the detective recognized.

"But it is important that I see you for a minute; there is something that I wish to say to you privately, and I do not think you wish me to shout it to you," persisted Doroc, still feigning.

"Peste, come in then," said D'Artivan, unlocking the door, and opening it impatiently.

The next instance the three men pushed into the chamber, flung the door shut and locked it, and con-

fronted the two occupants with their weapons pointed at their heads.

The astonishment of the Marquis, who was disguised in the same manner as when he first appeared to D'Ar-tivan in the villa, was only momentary. For more than two years he had been constantly on the watch for surprises of this very kind, and he quickly rallied from this one. He wore a sword at his side, and carried a loaded pistol always in the breast of his coat, which he could grasp in an instant. He plucked it from the pocket which held it, cocked and presented it at the head of Duroc with a quickness which surprised the detective in his turn, and growled fiercely:

"Fire, if you choose, all of you! But, by God, if you do, I will kill *thee* before I fall!"

Duroc's face turned crimson. He felt not a particle of fear, but he felt overwhelmingly ashamed. Here stood his quarry, within twenty feet of him, the two with swords, and one of the two with a loaded pistol aimed point-blank at his, Duroc's, head. It looked very much like a checkmate. What was he to do? It was plain that the Marquis (for Duroc identified the nobleman under his disguise), would die rather than surrender himself to the claws of the wild-cat Robespierre. But, how to secure him, that was the question that shot into Duroc's mind as he looked steadily at the muzzle of the Marquis' pistol. He had not lowered his own; and as the two stood eyeing each other with weapons aimed, they appeared like two duelists waiting for the signal to fire.

For several seconds Duroc said nothing; but he was thinking, and to some purpose. At length he said, in a perfectly even, impassive voice:

"I think, Marquis, that you are not aware of the purpose I had in coming into this room without leave.

I know who you are, you see, but it is not you whom I have been sent to take."

"Then, what in the fiend's name do you want?" demanded the Marquis, savagely, and with a slight change of countenance.

"Listen, my dear Marquis, and I will inform you," returned Duroc, in an unctious tone, and without removing his eyes for an instant from the nobleman's face.

"I am an agent of Citizen Danton, and of the Police. Well, these two powers (they are very intimate, I declare to you) are interested in this person who stands beside you, and who did me the honor on one occasion to make me a sort of father confessor. This interest is so great that I have been instructed to find Monsieur D'Artivan, and to bring him to my employer. Well, now that I have found him, I wish to take him. You do not object, of course, provided I do not insist on your accompanying him."

The attitude and manner of the Marquis and of D'Artivan during this address differed decidedly. The former listened with undisguised but restrained interest, his countenance exhibiting a malicious satisfaction. He was tired of his tool, who had betrayed him, and who was no longer useful to him. True, D'Artivan had flown to warn him that the gens d'arms were coming—after he himself had set the hound Robespierre upon his track. But it was D'Artivan's best interest at that time to prevent the arrest, because he held the latter yet in a measure in his power. He had no compunctions in considering, as he was at this moment doing, the surrender of his useless minion, and he rather enjoyed doing so.

While the detective was delivering himself of his cleverly contrived speech, the Gascon, who had grasped his rapier viciously, and had sprung to the side of his

master at the entrance of the detectives, began to tremble. He knew that the Marquis cared not a baubee for his fate, whatever it might be, and that he was, in fact, incensed at what he had sneeringly termed the treachery of a coward, when he had confessed that it was he who had denounced him to Robespierre. And now, during the little interval of silence, he knew intuitively that his doom was about to be pronounced, the Marquis would purchase his own safety by delivering him to the detective. He became ghastly, and his knees shook and almost refused to support him. In the sight of a penalty the criminal is always penitent, and at this vital moment the Gascon was truly sorry that he had not foregone his recent vengeance. As he thought of the terrible punishment he had received at the hands of Dumesnil, a cold sweat burst out upon his brow.

“My lord!”

D'Artivan's voice would not have been recognized, it was so weak and quavering, as he turned his ashen face toward the nobleman.

“My lord, you will not desert me?”

The question was an appeal, uttered in a whine.

The Marquis' lip curled with a smile. He did not turn his head, or reply to D'Artivan, but said to Duroc:

“I have no interest whatever in preventing you in the performance of your duty, if I am not myself interfered with. Understand this: if you attempt to arrest me, I will kill you. You may, perhaps, fire at me and wound me, even to the death; but unless your bullet strikes my heart or my brain it will not prevent mine from lodging in your vitals. You know that the aim of the Marquis of B—— has never failed. So, it is better that we understand each other at once.”

Duroc smiled amiably, as he replied:

“My dear Marquis, nothing prevents you from leav-



ing this room at this moment—alone. I promise you I will not prevent your doing so, and that you shall not be followed. Leave me your friend; his company will solace me for your absence—and loss.”

The Marquis, without replying to this facetious speech, bowed stiffly, and started toward the door without, however, lowering his weapon. But D'Artivan, forgetting to keep at a distance from his pursuers, and to be on his guard, if he really intended to resist them, darted after the recreant, and caught him by the long skirt of his coat.

“Oh, my lord, my lord!” cried he, in despairing tones, “do not desert me, for God's sake do not!”

But the Marquis turned savagely upon the abject wretch, and dealt him a severe blow in the face with the pommel of his sword, which he had drawn while moving toward the door, to avoid a surprise.

D'Artivan fell back with a cry, and was caught in the arms of the two assistants, who in a trice had his wrists pinioned with a stout cord.

As the Marquis opened the door, keeping his back to it and his face toward Duroc the while, he laughed mercilessly, and, flinging a look of contempt at the moaning adventurer whom he was remorselessly leaving to his fate, he said:

“Tell Robespierre that I send him a hostage for my appearance hereafter; and that I will come to him at the foot of the guillotine!”

The next instant the door closed upon him; the key, which he had quietly abstracted from the inside, grated in the lock, and his footsteps rapidly died away as he hurried down the staircase without.

## CHAPTER XXXVII.

### IN THE CHATEAU SAINTE MAUR.

The library in the St. Maur chateau was ablaze with light, although it was past one o'clock at night. It contained four persons, Helene, Dumesnil, Duroc and the prisoner—D'Artivan. These four were seated at a round table, so that the Gascon sat facing the hostess, and Dumesnil the detective. D'Artivan was still bound; and his sullen and stealthy aspect proved the prudence of this precaution, for in his desperate situation he would certainly have attempted any folly that suggested the barest possibility of escape from the giant, whom he regarded from time to time with a look of supreme terror. Dumesnil, however, who had been sent for the moment Duroc appeared at the chateau with his prisoner, had only given him a glance of intense loathing when he entered the library, and, taking the seat at the table which Helene had placed for him, ignored the wretch from that moment, keeping his great eyes fastened upon those of Helene with a look of solemn expectancy.

“Your name is D'Artivan?”

It was Helene who spoke; and she bent her piercing eyes upon the cowering wretch, who lowered his, but made no answer.

“It was you who caused the death of Paul Cambray, by the most cruel and dastardly means,” she continued, ignoring his silence. The murderer's head sunk lower, but he said nothing.

"You caused the death of an innocent man whom you called your friend, and who had treated you as such, solely from the desire to revenge yourself for the scar you wear, and which you received at your own invitation, and in a fair, no, an unequal, contest with a young girl."

The Gascon scowled, and he shot a defiant glance at the averted face of Paul's patron.

"Oh, you triumphed, you think, because you escaped punishment for that awful crime," said Helene, observing the look. "But you were not satisfied with tempting your fortune once; you permitted your miserable passion for revenge to lead you on to the commission of another crime. You abducted the poor girl whose courage you feared, and whom you hated because she would not overlook your insults."

D'Artivan glanced quickly at his accuser, at the word "abducted," and an expression of cunning flitted over his sinister face. Still, he said nothing.

"Yes," repeated Helene, whose scrutiny became closer, as she proceeded: "you abducted her, but we shall recover her; and if harm has befallen her your own fate will be fearful."

"D'Artivan's face turned a trifle paler; his mouth twitched nervously, and he glanced again at Dumesnil. Then his features settled into a dogged frown, and he deliberately stared at the speaker as if to defy her.

It may be wondered at, this parleying with the miscreant who undoubtedly knew what had become of Clarise: and it may be asked why he had not been taken at once to prison, tried, or examined there, and the truth forced from him. Instead of pursuing that regular course he had been brought to a private house—to be reproached. Every moment, under this mild subjection, he was becoming bolder, more confident, more defiant.

But it must be remembered that at that time there was in Paris absolutely no law; nothing but misrule. There was no tribunal to listen to and to redress private wrongs, or punish crimes against individuals. The "government" was a pretense; the office of justice a cloak, law a fiction. D'Artivan had gone to prison for murder before the days of anarchy had begun, and had been set free; he would go to prison now with far better assurance of escape, and without the slightest probability that he would ever be tried. Once behind the gates of the Conciergerie, nothing could ever be got from the malignant villain which would lead to the rescue of Clarise, if alive, or the discovery of her remains, if dead.

Helene had, therefore, determined to trust to her own powers to wring from him the truth; and she had directed Duroc to bring him to her house, when he sent her word of the capture. The very change in D'Artivan's demeanor, now, was what she expected and desired in aid of her purpose.

When D'Artivan raised his head to glare at his fair enemy, she looked disconcerted. D'Artivan saw this, and a smile, at once insolent and exulting, added to the distortion of his vindictive mouth. He continued to stare at her with the bravado air which he believed would soon confuse her; and his satisfaction was extreme when he observed her passing her white hands swiftly back and forth before her face, and in front of his eyes, as if to ward off their powerful beams. She did not, meanwhile, remove her own, but he believed it was the attraction of repulsion which kept her gaze steadfastly fixed upon him, and he stared at her the harder.

But presently a change began to steal into his face; the stare was becoming less wavering, less conscious,



it was becoming stony and fixed. All expression faded from his face, and the color with it. His figure assumed a stiff and unyielding position, as he sat leaning back in his chair; and at short intervals he drew his breath with a quick gasp.

At length Helene ceased moving her hands, rose up from the table, and said to the astonished witnesses:

"This man is now no more than an automaton with the sense of hearing and the power of speech. Whatever I bid him do, he will attempt; whatever I ask him, he will answer. Stand away from me, and listen."

Awestricken at this to them miraculous exhibition of what the superstitious age regarded as astrology, necromancy, or "the black art," the two men retreated to another part of the room, where they stood, mutely watching the face of the hypnotized prisoner.

Going to his side, Helene laid her hand upon one of his, not without a movement of repugnance, and in a low voice of command, said sternly:

"Pay strict attention to what I say to you. Of whom are you thinking?"

The muscles of the sleeper's face relaxed, and a revengeful smile played about his lips, as he answered, instantly:

"Of that vixen, Clarise Dechamp."

"When did you see her last?"

"Tuesday evening, at a little past seven."

Duroc started, and uttered an exclamation.

"Be silent," cautioned Helene, raising her finger. Then, turning again to D'Artivan:

"Where did you meet her?"

"On the Pont de Louvre, while we were going north of the river."

"Who were with you?"

"Two of my friends, Bompert and Estaing, who

are always borrowing money from me, which they never pay," muttered D'Artivan, spitefully.

"Well, when you met Clarise on the bridge, you and your companions, what did you say, and what did you do? Tell me the whole story, and be careful that you omit nothing."

Helene's voice had become metallic. Her bosom was heaving violently, her face pale, but her look was more than ever like that of the Greek divinity, cold and impenetrable.

D'Artivan began to breathe rapidly. Twice he made a movement, as if he would leave his chair.

Helene approached him with a sweeping step, and, laying her hand over his eyes for the space of a second, she said, imperiously:

"Speak!"

D'Artivan shrank back in his seat.

"When the girl saw us coming toward her, she crossed to the other side of the bridge. I whispered to Bompert: 'That girl tried to have me assassinated; now that she has seen me, she will have me arrested again, and thrown into prison. Lend me your cloak, and both of you stand by to help me capture her.'"

"Bompert and Estaing laughed, and said: 'This is fine; the girl is duced pretty;' and Bompert, who carried a cloak on his arm, threw it to me. I stepped quickly across to the opposite side of the bridge, and headed the girl off. She stopped, looked angrily at me, and said, the spitfire: 'How dare you! Let me pass.'"

"But I had no intention to allow her to pass. I opened the cloak, and said: 'But the evening is chilly, my dear, and I think you had better have this wrap.'

"Then, sapristi, before she could run away, or give so much as a squeak, I had thrown the cloak over her curly head, and caught it close under her pretty chin.

I shouted—'Bompart ! Estaing !' while I rapidly wound the folds around her head, until she was better muffled than a Queen's mummy, and the only sound that came from her was a little gasp. My friends were, for once, useful; I could not have managed her if they had not been there, the minx kicked and twisted so. But we took her up, and, as it was then quite dark, and there was no one except ourselves on the bridge, we crossed back to the south side without being molested or noticed. Then, while Estaing and I held her down under the shadow of the parapet by setting on her as if she were only a great bundle we were tired of carrying, I sent Bompart on the run for a fiacre. He found one at the foot of the Pont Neuf, in front of the Café Dauphin, and we placed our baggage in it, after a little tussle (she was as strong as a young mule), and made off."

When D'Artivan began this infamous disclosure, Dumesnil stretched his ox-like neck toward the miscreant, and listened with an intenseness that was painful to witness. As the tale progressed, the cords in his neck began to swell, his face to turn purple, his huge chest to rise and sink like the undulations of a sea upheaved. Once or twice a grinding sound issued from his glued lips, and his eyes became lurid. As D'Artivan paused to give vent to a laugh at the image before his wandering vision, Dumesnil's self-control gave way. Rearing like a colossus for an instant, he raised his arms above his head, and with a roar, which jarred every object in the room, he bounded upon the wretch who sat smiling in his chair and all unconscious of the frightful peril that threatened him. He did not even hear the tremendous sound which bellowed in his ears.

Helene, Duroc, aghast and horrified, darted toward Dumesnil, with a cry, but it was too late. As they seized the giant with their outstretched hands, he shook

them from him with as much ease as if they had been infants, reached down and grasped the throat of the doomed wretch, and lifted him out of the chair.

“Dog! Fiend!” shouted he, as he held the limp form in the air, with both his enormous hands; and, jerking the body toward him with fearful force, then back and forth—once, twice—there came a sound of cracking bones, and the head of D’Artivan hung back on his shoulders like the tassel of a cap.

Dumesnil had broken the Gascon’s neck!



## CHAPTER XXXVIII.

### THE SEARCH FOR CLARISE.

At six o'clock, on a foggy morning in September, an elegant coupé stood in front of the Café Dauphin. The Pont Neuf was already thronged with vehicles of almost every conceivable kind, passing either way over this great thoroughfare, while hundreds of pedestrians were trooping to the south side of the river.

Many of these were sight-seers merely, and when a lady, closely hooded, and a gentleman of extraordinary size got out of the carriage and approached the door of the café, a score of people stopped to look at them.

"Ciel!" exclaimed one vivacious grisette, poising herself on one foot, while she stared saucily up into the face of the gigantic stranger, "have you stepped down from the column, Monsieur?"

At this allusion to the statue, which loomed out through the thick fog, there was a laugh, which at once caused others to stop and listen. No Frenchman or French woman is ever in too much of a hurry to gossip or to enjoy a scene on the street; and the gentleman found it somewhat difficult to thread his way, with the lady on his arm, through the throng that loitered in front of the hotel.

Before he had reached the door, two young men, who were talking loudly, came off the bridge, and as they glanced at the titanic figure one of them grasped his companion by the arm and held him back.

"The devil!" exclaimed he. "Do you see nothing, Bompert? Look, look, stupid!"

And the speaker pointed at the figure of the gentleman, who had heard the exclamation, and had hastily turned his head in that direction.

"What do you wish me to see?" demanded the one called Bompert, staring carelessly about him.

"Why, this tall gentleman, of course; is it not D'Ar-tivan's enemy?" returned the other, pointing to the gentleman, who had now stopped and was earnestly gazing at him.

Suddenly, Dumesnil (for it was he) stepped close to the two, and said:

"Your name is Bompert, then?"

The young man answered, with some astonishment:

"Certainly, my name is Bompert; but what of that? Do you know me?"

"No," replied Dumesnil, composedly; "but I wish to know you. Will you do me the favor to step into the hotel for a few minutes?"

Bompert, still more astonished, looked at his friend.

"Well, Estaing," said he, hesitatingly, "what the deuce is this?"

Estaing shrugged his shoulders carelessly.

"Oh, we can very soon find out. It can do no possible harm to accommodate the gentleman, especially as we have the fog in our throats, and a stem of brandy will cut it."

"An excellent suggestion," remarked Dumesnil, with a smile; "let us seek the remedy at once. Excuse me for one instant;" and he returned to the side of Helene, who had accompanied him on his obvious errand, whispered a word to her, and assisted her back into her carriage, which remained standing where it was.

The three men then entered the café, and Dumesnil, without consulting his new acquaintances, immediately requested to be shown to a private room.

"Now, gentlemen," said Dumesnil, when they were seated at a table, with a bottle of brandy and glasses before them, "I will explain to you why I have made so curious a request, as soon as you have 'cut the fog in your throats.' Permit me to fill your glasses."

The two, wondering very much, swallowed the liquor with great satisfaction, and Dumesnil re-filled for them and himself.

"I wish," Dumesnil proceeded, "to inquire about a transaction in which you recently figured with one D'Artivan."

Both the young men started to their feet.

"Peste!" cried Bompert, casting a quick glance of uneasiness at the Captain; "what do you mean by that?"

Dumesnil regarded Bompert a moment with a satirical smile, and, without moving, answered:

"I mean the abduction of a young girl, which occurred on Tuesday night last, about seven o'clock, on the Pont du Louvre, in which D'Artivan was the principal and you two were accomplices."

"Dame!" exclaimed Estaing, looking toward the door, as though he meditated flight.

"Do not be disturbed, my friend," remarked Dumesnil, coolly; "there is no occasion for it, I hope. I only ask you to reply honestly to my questions, and, if you went no further than to assist in carrying the girl off, no harm will come to you. Sit down, then, unless there is something more than that against you."

The calm command of the giant reduced the pair at once to submission. They resumed their chairs, and, with hands that shook a little, seized their glasses and gulped down the contents.

Somewhat reassured, Bompert said, questioning his friend with his eyes:

"I do not know of any reason, Monsieur, why we

should tell you anything of the affair, if we really know anything about it, unless you have some natural interest in her—in the case."

"Certainly not," chimed Estaing, gathering composure from the brandy he had drank."

"Very good," said Dumesnil; "let me inform you, then, that the lady whom you saw with me a moment ago, and who is now waiting for me in the carriage outside, is the mistress of the poor girl whom D'Artivan abducted, and is deeply attached to her. We are searching for the maid, and we know from D'Artivan's own lips that it was his friend Bompert and his friend Estaing, who, he said, are always borrowing money from him and never paying it back, who helped to commit the act."

"The traitor!"

"The scoundrel!"

These indignantly uttered epithets burst from the lips of the two men at the same instant, and at the same instant they vociferated:

"What is it you wish to know?"

"I wish to know where the girl was taken, or where she is now," said the captain, with emphasis.

Bompert and Estaing stared at each other without replying, and in apparent perplexity.

"Come, gentlemen," exclaimed Dumesnil, sternly; "do not trifle with me, nor with your own safety. Answer my question."

"Oh, we do not object to doing so," returned Bompert, seriously; "but the fact is that we do not know."

"What, you do not know?"

Dumesnil's eyes were begining to roll. He did not believe them.

"It is true, Monsieur," said Estaing, gravely, feeling exceedingly uncomfortable under the glance of the



formidable stranger. "You see, we did not go with D'Artivan. He would not permit us to do that. He went off alone."

"In a fiacre."

"Yes, in a fiacre, and he drove toward the west."

"And do you know the driver of this fiacre?" demanded the captain, watching Bompert keenly.

"Yes," replied he, "I know him quite well. It was I who went for him."

"And his name?"

"Jean Turbot; his stand is at the next bridge."

"Good. May I ask you, then, to go for this Jean Turbot, and bring him here? Your friend will remain with me until you return."

"With pleasure," acquiesced Bompert, who rose at once from the table, quaffed another fog-destroyer, and left the room. Scarcely ten minutes had elapsed when he returned, bringing with him a hackman. Dumesnil addressed the latter quietly:

"My good fellow, you remember carrying a passenger with a very large bundle, which these two gentlemen assisted him to deposit in your hack, from the Pont du Louvre, last Tuesday evening, do you not?"

The hackman grinned, winked at Bompert, who, however, subdued him with a frown, and answered:

"Oh, I recollect. He gave me forty sols."

"Very well; where did you take the man, and his bundle?"

The hackman drew back, and said, sullenly:

"That is another matter, pardi."

Dumesnil got out of his chair, went up to the man and took him by the arm.

"What! You will not tell? But I have the means of compelling you, do you know that?"

The hackman jerked his arm violently, but the hand

of Dumesnil closed upon it with such force that he cried out.

"Come, will you tell? And look you, if you do not instantly do so I will break your arm, and then I will give you to a gens d'arm. Now—be quick!"

Dumesnil's manner was so terrifying, his grip of the hackman's arm was so painful, that the latter no longer thought of refusing.

"Well," he grumbled, "it is not my fault. I took the gentleman to the Rue St. Honore, in the old Faubourg, to a little villa where the Marquis of B—— used to stay sometimes."

Dumesnil groaned.

"Thousand thunders!" shouted he; "you took him there?"

"I swear it, Monsieur," answered the man, frightened at the captain's appearance.

"Very well; you will drive me there instantly," said the latter. "Gentlemen, I desire that you will go with me."

Bompart nodded to Estaing, and assented. They were curious to see the end of this strange adventure, and, besides, they had nothing now to fear from Dumesnil, who had assured them of this.

Accordingly, the four proceeded outside of the café at once, where, after informing Helene of his discoveries and purposes, he requested her to follow the fiacre in her carriage, and in a few minutes the two vehicles were rolling westward. As they drove along the Quai des Tuilleries, Dumesnil heard some one calling to him. It was Duroc, who had hailed him and motioned the fiacre to stop.

"Ah," ejaculated the detective, as he came running, and flourishing a small package in his hand, "I have been following you all the way from the Café Dauphin."

"You have news, then?" inquired Dumesnil.

"Yes," answered Duroc, looking moodily at the parcel he held, "and bad news, I am afraid."

"Well," said the Captain, uneasily, "tell it to me first, and then get in Mademoiselle's carriage behind us."

"Very well," observed Duroc, gravely; "I have in this package the hair of Clarise Dechamp!"

"What is that?" cried Dumesnil, aghast at this startling information. For a moment he could say no more, but sat gasping, and grinding his teeth.

Bompart and Estaing glanced at each other fearfully, and turned pale.

Duroc, who had been standing at the side of the vehicle, leaned inside, opened his parcel, and held up before the horrified passengers a 'switch' of long, wavy tresses of a beautiful black color, glossy and fine.

While the eyes of the three were riveted with a horrid fascination upon this eloquent witness of D'Artivan's crime, Helene called to them.

"Why are you stopping so long?"

She had not seen Duroc as yet.

"Put it in your pocket, for God's sake," groaned Dumesnil, "and say nothing now to Mademoiselle. Get in her carriage and come on."

Helene was surprised to see Duroc; but she eagerly received him, and began to question him at once.

The detective had intended to tell Dumesnil that he had found the hair at a hairdresser's shop, but he had not time to do so. The hairdresser was his sister, Madame Campan, who kept an establishment in the Rue St. Eustache. It was an inspiration of the detective's to look at every purchase of hair that his sister made, and get the particulars from her; and she had that morning told of this one. The person who had brought it to her was a man whose description was that of

D'Artivan. He had told her that it was the hair of his fiancée, and that he was compelled to sell it to obtain money for the burial expenses. He was very tearful, and she had given him a good price for it. Duroc had bought it from his sister, and then hurried to the chateau, where he was informed that Mlle. St. Maur had driven to the Café Dauphin, to which place he was to hasten, should he call during her absence.

During the ride, Duroc told Helene nothing of his discovery; but listened dejectedly while she expressed the hope that in a few minutes she would see her poor Clarise, and that all would be well again.

As yet she was ignorant of the fact that she was going to the house of her worst enemy, the Marquis of B——. But in fact that was her destination.



## CHAPTER XXXIX.

### IN BLUEBEARD'S DEN.

When Helene and those who accompanied her entered the yard of the villa in the Faubourg St. Honore, it was still early in the morning. They were not surprised, therefore, to see all the blinds drawn, and no one visible at the windows or in the garden. Duroc uttered a sigh of satisfaction at this; they were all the more likely to obtain an entrance. Dumesnil had halted the carriages half a block away from the house, and requested every one to get out. Then he had informed Duroc that they were going to the Marquis' villa, much to Duroc's surprise. The latter, as well as Dumesnil, knew something of the desperate character of the Marquis; and while neither of them expected to meet the latter here, they prepared themselves for even that improbable contingency. It was arranged that Helene should go to the door alone, while the others ranged themselves along the wall of the house so as not to be observed by any one on the inside who answered her summons. The moment the door opened, Dumesnil, followed in order by Duroc, Bompard and Estaing, should precipitate themselves into the passage, seize the servant and suppress any outcry; and then proceed to explore the house.

The precautions of Dumesnil and Duroc were well taken, their arrangements fortunate, as events soon proved.

Helene's summons brought Barbaroux to the door.

He was half asleep when he opened it; but his eyes brightened with astonishment when he saw, standing on the doorstep before him, a queenly-looking figure, a lady closely veiled, who asked him in a voice of irresistible sweetness:

“Is your master at home?”

“No,” your ladyship,” stammered Barbaroux, who was still further bewildered by this question. Who could this great dame be, who came to his master’s house at nine in the morning and called for him so nonchalantly? Barbaroux stared at her suspiciously and held the door a little closer. Helene thought of a little stratagem.

“It is of the greatest importance,” said she, in a grave tone, “that I should communicate with your master. His safety is more than ever threatened, and he must be warned, if he succeeds in escaping this new danger.”

Now, the Marquis was at that very moment standing at the top of the stair-landing, and he had heard the voice of Helene and recognized it. Always alert against surprises, he had just risen from his bed when the knocker sounded below, and had hastily slipped into a morning robe and out into the corridor to listen.

The sound of Helene St. Maur’s voice, unlike the voice of any other woman, could not be mistaken by any one who had ever heard it. And, as its soft notes ascended the stairs to him, it seemed to him that the house was whirling around with him. He clutched at the balustrade, or he would have fallen. For an instant he thought his heart had ceased to beat, and that he was dying. In a feeble voice he called to his valet:

“Barbaroux, quick, come here!”

The valet knew from his master’s weak and gasping

voice that something serious and urgent was the matter. He forgot his visitor, forgot to close the door and darted up the staircase.

Surprised, but not disconcerted, Helene looked into the yard, beckoned to her companions, and in a moment the four men had noiselessly entered the passage, and had closed the door behind them and locked it. The key was withdrawn by Duroc and placed in his pocket.

Helene had hurriedly whispered to Dumesnil as he came in:

"The Marquis himself is here!"

It was not a time to indulge surprise, and Dumesnil evinced none. On the left of the hall a door opened into the parlor where the Marquis had so successfully masqueraded with D'Artivan, and into this Dumesnil hurried his three aids, leaving Helene alone in the hall.

The apartment into which the party retreated extended back to and communicated with a library, the door leading into which was also partly open.

"Come," said Dumesnil, advancing toward it, "let us go in here. Something will come to pass directly, I tell you."

Followed by the rest, Dumesnil took possession of the library, and, closing the door, locked it. The four then sat down beside it to listen.

Meantime Barbaroux had flown to his master, in something of a panic. He found him leaning against the wall of his room, ghastly white and panting. The valet ran to a table upon which was a carafe of brandy, poured out a glass nearly full and put it to the lips of the Marquis, who drained it spasmodically and sank into a chair. The fiery fluid was not long in exhibiting its potency. As it ran through his veins and mounted to his brain the color returned to his face, his eyes took

an unusual glow, and his strained features relaxed into a smile at once wicked and triumphant.

"Where is the lady?" asked he, in a tense whisper, as he helped himself to a second glass of the brandy.

"In the hall below," responded Barbaroux, who was frowning anxiously while his master drank.

"The devil!" exclaimed the latter, angrily; "go at once and beg her to take a seat in the parlor. Then return here and help me to dress. And mind you, my excellent Barbaroux, I shall expect you to make me up finer this morning—in a shorter time, too; than you have ever yet done. Now hurry, and be back in a breath."

The key had scarcely turned in the door of the library, when the valet led Helene into the parlor. There he left her and hurried up to his master, whom he was greatly annoyed to find swallowing his third glass of brandy. Evidently the Marquis was nerving himself for some desperate venture, or else he was borrowing courage to meet, albeit in his own house, the woman he had sworn to humiliate; whose life he plotted night and day to blight.

Helene, in the meantime, had held a whispered consultation with her friends; and it had just been understood that they were to wait for a summons from her before they threw themselves upon the Marquis, when they heard his step on the stairs. Helene seated herself a few feet from the library door, and assumed a reserved and composed manner, which was decidedly at variance with her feelings.

The Marquis entered the parlor with a lithe step, smiling and extending his hand with as much courtliness as he had ever shown in the drawing-rooms of Marie Antoinette before they domiciled pigs instead of patricians. But Helene's cold reserve checked him. She simply rose, bowed with the dignity of an empress,



and resumed her seat. The Marquis drew a chair in front of her, and for the space of a minute they sat in silence, looking straight into the eyes of each other. There was a mocking, wicked light in his, a steady, stern questioning in hers. Once the spell of those wonderful eyes had fettered his brain, and filled his heart with the fires of a volcano. Now, their expression exasperated him, filled him with the rage of despair. He hated her with the fierceness of a tiger, because he loved her with the ferocity of a savage.

It was she who first spoke; and, if he had not fortified his strength with copious draughts of the strong brandy, and dulled his sensibilities with its subtle fumes, he could neither have endured to look into her eyes nor to listen to her voice without paling and trembling.

"I have come," said Helene, speaking with cold deliberateness, "to ask you for my maid, Clarise."

The Marquis smiled; and Helene saw by his manner that he knew beforehand the object of her visit. She felt intensely relieved by this discovery. It was he, then, who had caused Clarise to be abducted, or, at all events, it was he who detained the girl to help out in some, as yet to her unexplained, way his nefarious schemes of vengeance against herself. Had he not sworn to ruin or destroy every one who had witnessed, connived at or assisted in his humiliation and misfortune? Both Helene and Dumesnil had discovered long ago that he had taken such an oath; and, whatever might happen in the way of misfortune to any one who had landed at Calais from the packet "*La Charmante*" on that memorable morning so far in the past, that one should look to the Marquis of B—— as its author.

Helene waited for the Marquis to speak; but he only continued to smile insolently, toying the while with a rich chain which hung about his ruffled throat. He

was clad in a toilet of the period—the last relic of the old regime, when coats of satin and velvet, ruffles of lace, frilled shirt-fronts, powdered hair, and their elaborate and sumptuous accessories, were still worn by the remnant of the noblesse. He had his missing feature artificially supplied, and, but for the bold wickedness of his expression, would have impressed a stranger as a handsome patrician. Part of this he was, and all of this he had been. But to Helene, who read his soul, he was a repulsive monster—nothing more.

Tired of waiting for some admission of his complicity with D'Artivan, she spoke again; and this time imperiously:

"My lord, I have not come here to see you smile, or to witness your unmanly exultation over an act of revenge which would disgrace a galley-slave. I have come to demand that you restore my maid to me. I was told by your wretched tool and accomplice, D'Artivan, that he carried her off while she was returning home from an errand, and I have traced her to this house."

The Marquis eyed her with a sudden look of curiosity.

"Ah, you traced her here. Through whom, may I ask you? Not through D'Artivan, surely."

"No. Outside of this house a few steps from here, is the driver of the fiacre who brought D'Artivan and his prey to this place."

The Marquis looked uncomfortable. He glanced around the room uneasily, suspiciously, and his hand unconsciously stole to the hilt of his sword, for he had come down in full court costume as though to a ball in the Tuilleries; the intense vanity of the man keeping pace with his malignancy.

"And you think that your maid is here?" inquired he, slowly.

"I have the best of reasons to believe she is here," replied Helene, sternly; "and I trust you will produce her at once."

"Is your maid, then, so dear to you," queried he, in a voice of extreme bitterness, "that you can not spare a thought or a few minutes for the man who has suffered so much for you, given you such proofs of an imperishable love? Do you feel no remorse for the past time?"

The Marquis had risen, warming as he spoke, and stood before her with his arms folded, his eyes glowering down into hers, while she sat still, calmly observing him, her mind wandering after the invisible Clarise, who now filled all her thoughts. Her cold and indifferent manner began to exasperate him. With a fierce gesture he flung his arms apart, and, bending over her until his breath, hot with the fumes of brandy, fanned her cheek, he said, in a hissing voice:

"Sorceress! Worthy spouse of Moloch! You gloat over your victims, you are insatiable for more, you practice upon them the infernal arts of Lucifer; and yet you think there is to be no punishment for you. Bah, you are unlike the leopard in but one thing—you can change your spots! Thus you deceive, thus you succeed, and thus you escape. But, I tell you, Helene Sainte Maur, your 'divinity' has at last deserted you. You have come here with the boldness and the confidence of one who has befooled men too long to fear them. Well, we shall see what you will think of one man now, since you have thrust yourself into his power. Now, listen, my beautiful Diana; you are here, and you shall remain here! At last my vengeance is about to be complete; and you, yourself, have helped me to make it so. Ha, ha, do you know that I have been preparing to have you here? That I have already provided you with a maid? And one of your own choosing, too. Come, my

beloved, for I told you many times in the past that you were that, did I not? Come, then, let me conduct you to your chamber; or, would you prefer that I should summon your maid."

Helene had left her seat when the inflamed face of the Marquis bent over her, and stepped back from him, without evincing a particle of fear. Her eyes rested undauntedly upon him while he stood gloating at her. Had no succor been near, it is doubtful if she would have felt a tremor. Scorn, loathing, anger and the determination to rescue Clarise dominated every feeling for herself.

When the Marquis offered jeeringly to send for her maid, a thrill shot to Helene's heart. Instantly, but with no appearances of eagerness, she said, indifferently:

"You are not, then, entirely brutalized. As I am here alone, send for my maid."

Eyeing her curiously, and with some freakish idea stirring in his now overstimulated brain, the Marquis bowed to her with a strained deference, went to the door and called:

"Barbaroux!"

The valet was close at hand.

"Bring Mademoiselle's maid to her; and be careful to hold her tightly by the hand, else she may run."

Helene's breath began to come in gasps. Was it in fact Clarise who would enter the room in a moment or two? Ah, pray Heaven it—

The parlor door was suddenly thrown open, and a young woman, with a closely shorn head, haggard, wild-eyed, and dressed in shabby garments, slowly crept into the parlor. Her face was of a dark tan color, her head rested droopingly on her chin, and she did not look up. Her hands were crossed behind her.

The shadows in the room were deep, and only stray



rays of the morning sun came timidly through the venetian blinds; but the indistinct light fell upon the girl's thin figure, and Helene's heart sank. She turned to the Marquis, who stood near the window, humming in a jocular voice a couplet from a theatre ballad, and sent her summons ringing upon his startled senses:

“Dumesnil!”

There was a crash, the tread of feet, and the Marquis of B—— was shaking like a reed in the grasp of the giant.

## CHAPTER XL.

### A BAFFLED VILLAIN.

The sword of the Marquis was at his side, in his bosom was a loaded pistol ; but his hands were pinioned to his breast by the wrists, and he was swayed back and forth in the grip of a Hercules. Taken utterly by surprise as he had been, he nevertheless lost neither his courage nor his self-possession ; but, as Dumesnil forced him down into a chair, his eyes, full of implacable hate, looked unflinchingly into the skipper's face, and he hissed out a question which, at least, was reasonable—

“What do you mean by this assault?”

Before Dumesnil could answer, he was startled by a scream from the other end of the room, followed by another from Helene. Dumesnil started back from the Marquis' chair, and turned toward the rest of his party, who were already hovering over the form of the strange girl, who lay, as if dead, on the threshold of the room. Helene, kneeling down upon the carpet, was calling in entreating tones :

“Clarise, Clarise, it is I, your mistress. Do you not hear me?”

In his astonishment Dumesnil forgot his prisoner, and stood staring stupidly at the scene; while Duroc, indulging his professional weakness, had drawn the stolen tresses from his pocket, and was holding them before the eyes of his bewildered patroness and smiling triumphantly.

Dumesnil advanced to the group and peered eagerly

at the prostrate girl, who had just opened her eyes, and now turned them with as look of intense affection upon Helene. Yes, they were Clarise's eyes; it was Clarise herself, but—

“My God!” shouted Dumesnil, gazing down upon her with amazement; “what have they done to her?”

Clarise, who had lifted her eyes and looked at Helene when the latter called to Dumesnil, had recognized her mistress, and had tried to speak to her, but her voice failed her, she was weak from fasting, and the shock of Helene's presence overcame her. With a faint, pleading cry, she sank to the floor, murmuring:

“My mistress!” and swooned away, as Helene started toward her.

Meantime, everyone had been too absorbed in the discovery of the lost Clarise, and in their attempts to revive her, to think of the Marquis. But, as the girl regained consciousness, Bompert stole a look at the other end of the room, and cried:

“Hello! Where is the Marquis?”

The four men instantly focused their eyes upon the empty chair, for empty it certainly was. Then they made a simultaneous rush for the library, the door of which Dumesnil had burst open when he was summoned by Helene. The latter merely turned her head in the direction they had taken, and quietly went on bathing the face of Clarise with the contents of her vinaigrette.

Duroc was the first to dash into the library. It had no other entrance but the window on the garden side was open. The Marquis had not been as interested in the condition of Clarise as the others had been, and had naturally given his attention to his own case, and with gratifying results.

Duroc was overcome with chagrin; Dumesnil with disappointment.

"Sacre!" growled the latter, "the scoundrel is a fox as well as a wolf. He is off. Still, we will search the house all the same."

"Yes," exclaimed Duroc, angrily; "and I will not let him get off the next time."

"Oh," laughed Dumesnil, who had now recovered his good humor, as he saw Helene and Clarise sitting together and looking very grateful, "the 'next time,' my friend, is the invariable excuse of inexperience. It is an apology."

Duroc colored with mortification.

"After all," he said, rallying, "we have done all that we set out to do. We have captured the abductor, and we have recovered the girl."

"And you have proved yourself a good hunter," added Dumesnil, "since you have recovered a scalp."

The search throughout the house, of course, was unavailing. Neither the Marquis nor his valet was found; the villa was absolutely deserted, apparently, and the explorers returned to the parlor. There they were met by Helene with several commissions.

"Monsieur Dumesnil," said she, "you will find me a room in the house where I can assist my maid to change her clothing and appearance; and mind that there is plenty of water and some soap, and several towels. You, Monsieur Duroc, will go to the nearest café and order a breakfast for all of us, to be sent here as quickly as possible."

"What!" cried Dumesnil, astonished at this last command, "you will breakfast here, in this house?"

"Yes," answered Helene, smiling at his ludicrous gestures. "Besides, Clarise has eaten nothing since yesterday morning, and very little of anything since she came here. She is very weak. Go, both of you."



Duroc hurried out of the house to execute his commission, with an amused smile on his face.

"Dame!" muttered he, "if we only had the Marquis, I should enjoy my breakfast this morning, *sacre*, yes."

When Duroc returned, two servants from the café in the Hotel d'Angleterre came behind him with two immense waiters covered with large napkins of snowy damask. In ten minutes they had spread the contents on the table in the dining-room, and the six uninvited guests of the Marquis of B—— sat down to a delightful breakfast, with the best possible appetites. Clarise was transformed into her former self now, except that she was very pale, and her cheeks and form were not as plump as was their wont. The tan had been washed from her face, and the discovery that it had been stained excited the curiosity of the men to such an extent that they overwhelmed her with questions. But Helene refused to permit her to talk.

"Do not insist on her answering now," said she; "she is too weak, and she must eat and then rest, before everything. We will go from here to my hotel, and there you shall hear her tell her story. I promise you it will be an interesting one." And Helene looked with an affectionate smile at Clarise, into whose wan face a little pink blush stole for a moment.

With this promise they contented themselves; and the success of the morning, the happiness of the two who were reunited and the novelty of the situation all tended to make this breakfast one that was not to be forgotten. It would probably have added to the zest of the occasion if they had known that the Marquis and Barbaroux were directly beneath them, in a secret sub-cellar which the precious pair had burrowed out, and in which they had concealed themselves a few minutes after the master's escape from the parlor. Here they

waited for an hour or more before venturing up; and when they stole through the house and saw the various evidences of a "free tenancy" of the premises by the rescuing party, the Marquis turned to Barbaroux and said:

"By Heaven, if I had that woman for a wife, I believe I could conquer a continent."

Clarise had declared, ten minutes after finishing her breakfast, that she felt a cold terror in remaining any longer in the "house of Bluebeard"; that she felt sure he was watching them from a place of concealment, and begged her mistress to leave the horrid prison at once. There was no occasion for remaining any longer, if not on Clarise's account, and accordingly the whole body unceremoniously abandoned the premises, the freakish humor of Bompert moving him to hang upon the outside knob of the front door the discarded rags of Clarise, with an inscription pinned to them:

"These are the clothes of a girl who was eaten by the cannibal who inhabits this den."

No sooner were the doors of Helene's boudoir closed upon the six tired adventurers than Clarise was importuned to tell the story of her imprisonment. A glass of wine was brought to her, she was made to recline on the soft cushions of a divan, and, with her five eager listeners grouped around her, she began:

"You know how I was caught on the bridge, all of you, especially you two," turning her eyes with a little grimace, that was not at all spiteful, at the two young men. Then, as they showed the most comical confusion, and the most sorrowful contrition, she laughed merrily, though in a pathetically weak voice, and said:

"Do not be distressed, however, you were deceived by that horrid creature who was the—"

Clarise's tone changed; she broke off the sentence

with a sob, as she looked down at her black dress. She had suddenly thought that it was D'Artivan to whom she owed all her misery, Paul's death, the mourning garments she was wearing. There was a tear even in Dumesnil's big eyes, as they watched the pitiful quivering of the pretty chin, of the tender little mouth, and the silent effort she made to repress her emotion.

In a moment or two she continued:

"I had no idea where I was being taken; but the fiacre had not gone far when it stopped. I could not hear what was said then, but I was carried by two persons into the house where you found me, and up a stairway. When the cloak was taken off I looked quickly around, and saw D'Artivan and the Marquis and that old valet Barbaroux standing over me. They had placed me on a chair, in a room in the top of the house; the one I showed to you, Mademoiselle, and which had only one little window. Two lamps were burning on the shelf, and I could see the faces of the three men quite plainly. D'Artivan was laughing to himself, like a demon; the Marquis was looking at me as if he was considering what I would sell for, or what I would be good for. I learned the very next morning what his look meant, as you will see. Barbaroux was looking sullen.

"Well, they soon left me, the Marquis telling the valet to lock the door on the outside and keep the key in his own pocket. I was greatly distressed when I thought of how defenceless I was. I went to wondering whether Mademoiselle would ever find me; if D'Artivan meant to kill me, because I had—had wounded him; if the wretches intended to keep me there or take me somewhere else. Then I fell to trembling, and at last I fell asleep in my chair.

"I was disturbed once by some one trying the door, I

think; and when I was quite awake in the morning Barbaroux came to the room, unlocked the door, and walked in. He had a bundle in one hand, and a waiter with food on it in the other. I was very hungry, and I wanted to keep up my strength, so that I might be the better able to help myself, so I ate my breakfast.

"Barbaroux sat by the window while I ate, and when I had finished I said to him:

"What is your name?"

"He was very sullen, and he did not wish to talk, but he answered, 'Barbaroux.' Then I asked him what I had been brought there for. He looked at me a minute without speaking, and then he got up and opened the bundle. What do you think was in it? Mon Dieu, only some ragged clothing, and a dark, moist sponge!

"What are these things for?' I asked, quite astonished. 'They are for you,' answered the man, 'and as soon as I go out you are to dress yourself in them and fold up your own clothes and place them on this chair. Then, you are to take this sponge, and apply it to your face and hands, until you have given them a nice brown color, like the Marseillaise women have. You must not be too long at it, either, because my master will come to you shortly, since it is he who will tell you what you are here for.'

"Do you think I was not astonished, or angry? Do you think I was frightened? Well, I was so much astonished that I could not speak for a whole minute. Then I became so angry that I ran to the chair upon which Barbaroux had laid the clothes, and, picking them up, I carried them to the window, intending to throw them out into the garden; but the window was fastened, and the shutters were closed and nailed. I threw the rags on the floor, and faced the man:

"You old wretch, 'I screamed; 'do you think I will



ever put on those tatters, or paint myself either? No. Do you hear? No, no-o!’

“You see, I was not a bit afraid, that is—just then. But Barbaroux only laughed to himself, and—yes, I will tell you what he said: ‘Oh, if you require a lady’s maid, I am very skilful. I am going away now; but I will come back in half an hour, and if your toilet is not then finished—well, the Marquis says that I must dress you myself!’

“Before I could recover from this monstrous speech, the wretch had gone out. Then I was afraid. I sat down and trembled, and I thought: ‘After all, what does it matter? I must be wise, if I hope for any help out of this.’ So I put on the clothes, and you saw what a fright I was in them, did you not? And then I painted my skin, and made myself so horrid that I could not help laughing.

“Directly the Marquis came, wearing his green flap over his nose. He sat down and looked at me. I looked at him also, and said nothing.

“‘Do you want your liberty?’ asked he, after a little. I replied, ‘That is foolish; everything wants liberty.’ He smiled at this, and said: ‘Perhaps you would like to be rich?’ I began to feel uneasy again. But I answered him, quite severely: ‘Perhaps.’

“Then the villain got up, and, coming up to me, he held out a large handful of beautiful diamonds, moving them before my eyes so that they sparkled like little suns, and said, in a low voice:

“‘All these are yours, if you will do one thing for me.’

“I began to feel more afraid than at first. ‘What is that one thing?’ I asked him, and I recollect that my voice was quite as low as his. He leaned over my chair, and said:

““I will give you a deadly poison in a little vial and you will put ten drops of it in your mistress's coffee, and ten drops into the coffee of Sir Philip Belmore, the first time they breakfast together at the chateau. I know they do so at least once a week, and it will not be at all difficult for you to do this for me, and you can not be discovered, because in these irregular times there are no investigations. Then, as soon as they are dead, which will be the case within an hour, you may come to me, and I will give you these jewels; they are worth one hundred thousand francs, and you can buy a pretty husband and a pretty cottage with them. Will you earn them!”

“Mon Dieu! What do you think I did then?”

Bompart, who had been leaning forward, lost in the recital, and drawing his breath excitedly, surprised every one with an answer:

“Noble girl; you refused.”

Every one smiled except Clarise, who looked at Bompart disdainfully.

“Well, I was no more afraid, I was enraged. I sprang out of my chair, and with both my hands I caught the villain by his cravat, and twisted it so hard that it made his face purple, before he could release himself. He threw me away from him, and I fell against the arm of a chair and fainted.

“When I came to my senses, Barbaroux was sitting over me. I was lying on a sofa, and my head and forehead were bound with a wet handkerchief. I felt very queer on top of my head, and I put my hand up to see what was the matter. My God! they had cut off my hair! Well, I gave a frightful scream, and fainted again.

“Nobody was in the room when I recovered that

time; but Barbaroux came to bring me my dinner, and when he put it down, he whispered to me?

“‘Do not eat of the soup, nor the meat, neither at this nor any meal here.’

“‘I was frozen. I could only gasp out to the man, as he went out:

“‘What is to be done with me?’”

“Barbaroux hesitated a little, and then came into the room again, and whispered: ‘As soon as you are absolutely under the influence of the drug which is in the food, and which only causes the mind to wander, and creates a stupor, but does not put the brain to sleep, D’Artivan will carry you away, the Bon Dieu knows whither. Be careful!’”

“After that, I was afraid to eat at all, and by this time I should probably have been stupefied from starvation if you had not come.”

Clarise had finished her story, which had certainly not been tedious to her friends. Bompart had manifested the most feeling during its recitals; and as she concluded and sank back exhausted on her cushions, he rose and went to her.

“Ah, Mademoiselle!” said he, seizing her hand; “it is of you that I have dreamed, it is of you that I shall always dream from this moment. You are a heroine!”

It was plainly seen by the rest that Bompart had been captured by the pretty prisoner herself.

Just at this moment there was a loud commotion in the street. Vehicles were rumbling along at an unwonted speed in the quiet and slow Faubourg, a babble of voices sounded through the great mansion as if it had suddenly been invaded, and the tramp of thousands of feet upon the stone pavements drew every one to the windows.

A great throng was passing; a throng in which there

were mocking and jeering faces, faces that were stern and gloomy, faces that wore an expression of terror. They were all turned in the direction of the field of blood—Place de la Revolution.

“What can it mean?” queried Helene, with a sinking voice.

As if the throng had heard her shrinking question, a hoarse and deep-lunged cartman rose and stood upon the seat of his tumbril as it rattled past, and shouted to the people in the houses:

“Marie Antoinette is going to the block to-day! A bas l’Austrienne!”

And as the brute’s voice died on the choking air, a woman, whose white face rivaled the marble of Diana’s, sank down at the window of the stone chateau, and was covered with the hands over which the Queen of France and Navarre had wept.



## CHAPTER XLI.

### THE QUEEN IS DEAD.

The Queen was dead. The last great tie that had bound Helene St. Maur was snapped when the axe of the assassin fell upon the neck of the defenceless and unoffending victim of French malevolence, brutality and communism. The chateau was a house of mourning, and its occupant and mistress was preparing to depart from a land she had learned to loathe.

On the twentieth of October, Helene's arrangements having been completed, she sent for Danton.

Danton was now at the zenith of his power. He was a lion among the stern and bloodstained spirits of the Revolution, but to Helene St. Maur he was a slave. Not that she imposed such bondage upon him; on the contrary, she had told him in distinct but gentle language that her lines and his lay far apart. He had accepted her dictum, but still he hovered about her, comforted by her presence, held back from many an imprudent or merciless act by her influence.

When he came to her now, he appeared cast down, although he knew nothing yet of her determination to leave France. Helene observed his disquietude, and inquired the cause of it.

"The sun is setting upon France," said he, sadly; "That last sigh of Marie Antoinette will sound in every court of Europe, and wake the spirit of retribution in the breast of every ruler. The death of Louis XVI. was a mistake; the death of his Queen was a crime."

"Yes," exclaimed Helene, bitterly; "and a crime which France will expiate with misfortunes and humiliations for three generations."

"I fear for her future," sighed the great leader.

Helene informed him of her desire to leave France at once.

"Ah, you are going, then?" exclaimed he, drooping his massive head upon his hand. Then, after musing for a few moments, he said, in a troubled voice:

"With you departs hope. I am rushing upon a dark fate; my life is going out; I am approaching a cataclysm."

A shudder passed over him; he seemed to feel the edge of the axe which within a half-year was to rob him of life.

It was some time before he raised his head; but his features had then resumed the look of boldness so often marked by those who watched him in the Convention.

"You will require passports," said he, remembering that she had sent for him.

"For myself and my household," answered Helene, quietly.

Danton reflected a moment and said:

"You have an eccentric acquaintance named Dumesnil, I believe?"

"Yes," replied she, regarding him with some uneasiness.

"Does he accompany you?"

"He is anxious to go to England," returned Helene; and added, "he has volunteered to go in my escort until the frontier is crossed."

"And where do you propose to cross?"

"At a point near Metz."

Danton regarded her with surprise.

"What, you go to Austria or Germany, then?"

"I shall travel, but my destination is Italy, as I usually spend my winters there. I wish to travel for a month or more before going there, however, to divert my thoughts from the recent fearful occurrences."

"Very well," said Danton, gloomily; "to-morrow I will send you passports that will protect you. How many will accompany you besides this Monsieur Dumesnil?"

Danton was thinking of her servants, and not of the possibility of her taking others with her. But Helene answered:

"The number is yet uncertain. Can not the papers read for myself and household?"

Danton considered. "That would hardly do," said he; "I will make them for yourself and ten others," he concluded, with a humorous look; "that will certainly answer all your requirements."

Without waiting for her thanks, he took her hand, raised it to his lips, and, while he imprinted upon it a fervid kiss, he murmured:

"Farewell!"

Then he left her, walking from the boudoir with an agitated step, and without turning his head to look at her, as he passed into the corridor.

Sir Philip and his party, with the exception of Dumesnil, were still in the Catacombs. They must be communicated with, and it would require the most careful management to get them back into the chateau. Helene waited for the passports before sending for the Captain. They came about noon on the following day, and the Captain was then immediately summoned. He was overjoyed at the sight of the papers. It only remained now to assemble. It was his task to bring the brothers, with their servants, to the chateau, and, after a consultation with Helene, he decided to take with

him six outfits for as many workingmen, the sizes to permit the clothing to be worn over that of the persons they were intended for. That night at eleven o'clock, Dumesnil made the first of three visits which were necessary, since to have carried more than two suits of the clothing at once would have led to detection.

At twelve o'clock on the next night the three Englishmen, Dumesnil, Helene and Clarise, and the three valets, stood in the boudoir, the windows of which had been closely shuttered, and the heavy curtains drawn.

It was a memorable meeting, a solemn convention. They had yet to pass through perils that would threaten, confront, follow, or surround them at every step of the route to the Rhine. At the porte cochere outside stood a berlin and four, and in front of it four powerful horses under saddle. The hour set for their departure was twelve—midnight. All the servants had that day been sent away; the only information given them was that their mistress was on the eve of departure, her usual custom at this season of the year, and they manifested no surprise. One of the women, however, had grumbled considerably on leaving, a housemaid named Jeannette. This girl had shown a decidedly inquisitive disposition since she came into Helene's service a few months previously, and had been often absent from the chateau without giving any satisfactory reason therefor. Helene would have discharged her some weeks before had she not expected soon to dispense with all her help. The girl was the last to leave, and was seen by Clarise, who looked upon her with suspicion, to loiter at the end of the Square for several minutes, standing in the glare of the lantern above her, with her face turned steadfastly toward the chateau, as if watching it with some sinister purpose. When she disappeared she started in the direction of the Pont Royal, northward.



A distant church bell was sounding a quarter past twelve, when the berlin, followed by four horsemen (the three brothers and Dumesnil, who were attired now as domestic servants) moved leisurely out of the courthouse. The sky was dimly starred, and the night shadowy and still. Helene and Clarise were inside the coach, the two servants of Hubert and Ralph Meltham were on the box beside Guppy, who wore the livery of Mademoiselle's coachman. Dumesnil's costume was that of a footman, that of Sir Philip had belonged to her steward, while the brothers wore the livery of the grooms. There was nothing to excite suspicion in the appearance or departure of the travelers, after they had been manipulated by Helene's artistic hands, and as the passports they carried were signed by the then most powerful man in all France, they felt comparatively safe from immediate danger.

Just as they turned into the boulevard they were startled by the sound of footsteps behind them. Some one was running after the berlin. They could now hear him breathing, and—

"Hold on!" came the next instant, and a dark figure darted alongside of the coach, and grasped the handle of the door. Guppy drew up quickly, and called, in a subdued voice:

"'Ere you! Wot are you capering after, come!"

But Helene had recognized Bompert, who had thrust his head in at the open window.

"Silence, Guppy," called she. And to Bompert:

"What is it, Monsieur?"

"Oh, Mademoiselle," panted the young man; "do not stop here. Let me get into the coach and ride along, while I tell you what I have run all the way from the Rue St. Denis to tell you."

"Get in, then," ordered Helene, vaguely uneasy,

but absolutely calm. She had lived too long in the midst of dangers and alarms to lose composure, even in the face of them.

Bompart scrambled into the berlin and seated himself by the side of Clarise. The berlin started forward again, and in a few minutes the entire party were crossing the Place St. Michel. Bompart had recovered his breath, but he was greatly agitated, and it was only when the bridge was reached that he was able to proceed.

"Mademoiselle," he began, "will you permit me to lower the blind on this side?"

"Do so, if you think it necessary," replied she, wondering at his manner. In a moment he had drawn the curtain and sat crouched against it, as if he feared being seen by some one outside, which indeed was the case.

"Now, Mademoiselle, listen. An hour ago I went to the office of the Diligences, in the Rue St. Denis, near Filles-Dieu, just a hundred yards from where we are at this very moment, to see if I could secure a seat for Calais; for you must know that I am a 'suspect' since yesterday, and have been hiding by keeping away from my lodgings. I am going to England, or anywhere out of this cursed country. Well, pardon me; it is not of this of which I have to speak. So, when I found that there would be no diligence leaving for Calais until Friday, I sat down outside, in the shadow of the Filles-Dieu, to think what I should do. While I sat there cuddled on a stone block, two men came up to the spot and stood within ten feet of me. I kept quite still, trembling with apprehension, but it was too dark for them to see me in the shadow there. Well, they began to talk in low tones to each other, and in a minute or two I discovered by his voice that one of them

was that Marquis of B——. He was saying to the other:

“ ‘Are you certain that she is going to-night?’

“And the other one answered, ‘I saw the girl Jeannette herself two hours ago. I said to her that I hoped she had something to tell me, and I gave her the weekly wages, although she had not yet earned any. Jeannette answered that she had very important news; that without a doubt her mistress would leave Paris at midnight, on her way out of France, provided with passports for herself, that Captain Dumesnil, and her servants. That all the servants she did not want had been to-day dismissed, and the chateau was at that moment as dark, as silent, as empty as the Bastille. That Mademoiselle goes to Metz, and will travel through the Rhenish country and through Austria, and will finally go to Italy for the winter.’

“The Marquis listened to this with a great deal of interest, and, from his constantly moving his hands in a nervous manner, I judged he was greatly excited. When the man finished telling him, he said, earnestly: ‘Come, then, let us take seats in the diligence for Metz. Fortunately, Sunday is one of its leaving days, and, as the diligence is to start at twelve, we are in time. Have you the passports?’

“‘Yes, my lord,’ the man replied, ‘and I think I made a capital imitation of Robespierre’s signature. Lucky that we had some of his old letters about that Dudevant scandal, and his seal, pardieu; otherwise, I do not believe we could have succeeded.’

“Then,” concluded Bompard, “they moved off toward the diligence office, and I heard no more of their conversation. No sooner were they out of sight, than I started to come to you as fast as my legs would take me. I thought perhaps you would desire that excel-

lent Duroc to pursue the Marquis and capture him. You see I could not denounce him myself, and, besides, Mademoiselle, it was you who ought to know at once that he has some new plot on foot."

Helene had said nothing to interrupt this narrative, and her countenance expressed no emotion. Her lips were compressed, and her eyes assumed a sternness rarely seen in them, and that was all.

"I am greatly obliged to you, sir," she said, in a composed voice, "for the trouble you have taken to inform me of this. And now, may I ask what you intend doing for yourself? If you are sought for, and are still in Paris, you will undoubtedly be found; and to be found is to be doomed."

"Ah, Mademoiselle," exclaimed Bompert, shuddering at the danger of his position, "I am only too well convinced of that. Well, will you advise me?"

"Poor fellow," murmured Clarise, who thought of Paul at the moment.

But Bompert turned toward Clarise with a face glowing with gratitude:

"Oh! you sympathize with me; do you not?"

Helene had been thinking rapidly. This young man's life would certainly be sacrificed to the universal thirst for blood if he remained another day in Paris. And it was perhaps in her power to save him. Her resolution was taken.

"Monsieur Bompert," said she, "I have passports for myself and household, to the number of eleven. We number only ten; there is fortunately one vacancy, by the merest chance. I will attach you to my suite as my private secretary, and you will pass under the *nom de plume* of Alfred Verdalle. Remain, therefore, where you are, and do not forget your position, and especially your name—Verdalle."



This sudden and wonderful escape from the gravest dilemma Bompарт had ever encountered overwhelmed him with surprise, gratitude and joy. He sank on his knees, and, seizing Helene's gloved hand, pressed it to his lips, murmuring, while his eyes filled : .

"Ah, Mademoiselle, you are my benefactress; you shall command me to die for you, and I will do it!"

The tender little heart of Clarise was touched. She placed her hand upon the shoulder of Bompарт, and whispered:

"I am very glad. You are a lucky person, Monsieur Bompарт."

Bompарт moved closer to Clarise, and, looking at her with a smile of profound appreciation, exclaimed:

"Ciel, I should say so!"

At that moment the berlin, which was now rolling on at a very rapid rate of speed, followed by the four riders at a gallop, passed the Metz diligence. A man's head was thrust out of the window next to Helene, and, by the light of the berlin's lantern, she saw the face of the Marquis of B—scowling at her escort behind. At the same instant Clarise, who had been looking up at the driver's seat, smothered a cry, and shrunk back in her corner.

"Good Heavens, Mademoiselle," she whispered, "there is Barbaroux!"

## CHAPTER XLII.

### ON THE MOSELLE.

The waters of the blue Moselle were dancing in the bosom of the Alsatian valley, catching the gold of the October sun, and throwing it back in moulted waves. On the wind-swept current a white sail spread its arms like the wings of a huge albatross; and under the shifting shadow sat the travelers whom we left in the streets of Paris speeding toward Metz.

At that historic town they had chartered a boat to carry them to the mouth of the Moselle, at Coblenz; and they were now approaching the fortifications of that, the strongest of Prussia's frontier towns. Already they could see, rising on the opposite side of the Rhine and overlooking Coblenz, the fortress of Ehrenbreitstein perched on its vaulting rock, hundreds of feet above the river. The forest-crowned Vosges stretched away in purple distance, and a land of peace spread its smiling fields to the right, as they sailed on the murmurous river.

Such a throng of awful memories were passing in the minds of the travelers, that they spoke not, but sat in quiet reverie, reviewing—with little prayers of thankfulness that they were over—the blood-red scenes, the Hædan tragedies they had witnessed, in the land of revolution. It was past; and as this happy conviction came back to Clarise, her white throat suddenly swelled with sound, and over the joyous river rippled the music of a song. On the banks where the boatmen were dry-

ing their sails, in the fields where the harvesters were gathering the grain, on the hill-sides where the shepherds were watching their browsing herds, the song of thanksgiving made them pause to listen, as it throbbed on the autumn air.

Then there was silence again, but the melody dying in the distant hills re-echoed again and again in the grateful hearts of those who were fleeing forever from the land of storm and blood.

Closer and swifter, as it felt the deepening current of the river hastening to its union with the Rhine, the white-sailed boat sped down upon the bustling town, and every eye was turned toward the rock of Ehrenbreitstein.

Sir Philip sat at the side of Helene, musing. He had been silent so long that she bent a curious glance upon him.

"Will you awake before we arrive?" asked she.

He returned her smile, and taking her hand with a tenderness that brought a blush to her cheek,

"Do you see the Rhine yonder, how it leaps and sparkles when the Moselle sinks into its embrace? Ah, surely, you must be weary of the isolation you imposed upon your heart. You have seen the great, how they were bowed to the dust in shame; how they were racked with the agony of death; how they fell from the topmost heights of power into an abyss. And the shame, the agony, the ruin—were they not caused solely by ambition? Believe me, it is sweeter to be human than to be god-like with human attributes. I have waited long; I have followed you far; let us rest; let us rest!"

He raised her hand to his lips, and he felt it tremble; he looked into her eyes, and he saw them droop; he whispered a word, and her mouth quivered. She turned her head from him, but her hand lay still in his. Was she yielding to her lord at last?

The Saxon blood in Belmore's veins was once more leaping through them as madly as when he first drew sword for her behind the convent at Boulogne; but how different were his emotions now! It was love that stirred it now; and heaven, he believed, was opening before him. Burning words were springing to his lips, when—

“Look! Oh, look!”

This cry, breaking suddenly from Clarise, who sat in the bow of the boat, with finger pointed up the river, and eyes staring in affright at what she saw, brought Sir Philip out of his dream, as it woke the others from their sweet reveries.

For some time, perhaps half an hour, they had noticed another boat with two sails gliding down behind them, and rapidly overtaking their own. But two men were visible on the deck, and these two had appeared to be making superhuman efforts to increase their speed. At the moment that Clarise cried out, this boat had run close to the stern of theirs, and, as it veered to the right, a dozen ruffianly fellows suddenly threw off a huge sail-cloth under which they had been hid, and sprang to the side of their vessel, brandishing cutlasses in their powerful hands.

Both the boats at this time were close to the side of the river farthest from the town; the bank itself was not more than twenty feet distant; and the city was hidden from view. It was an isolated inlet, from the heel of which rose precipitately the hill of Ehrenbreitstein. The sun had just left its last beam quivering on the waters, and deep shadows were closing over the spot.

The quick glance that followed Clarise's cry revealed enough to bring every one in the forward boat to his feet, and every sword from its concealment. On the deck of the hindmost vessel stood the Marquis of B——, a



cutlass in one hand, a pistol in the other, in the midst of a crew of ruffians which, too plainly, he had hired to pursue and capture his fleeing enemies. His face was inflamed with passions at once demoniac and joyous; and his voice rang out with triumph as he shouted:

“Surrender, if you would save your lives!”

But Dumesnil, standing in front of the rest, sent back a warning which kindled a flame of fury in the breast of the renegade nobleman:

“Scoundrel! Do you still wish to lose your ears?”

“Board them!” shouted the Marquis, brandishing his cutlas, and aiming his pistol at the skipper’s breast; “board them, and spare none of the men. Take the women alive. Forward!”

In the midst of his crew he sprang upon the rail, and at the same instant fired at Dumesnil; but the bullet went wide of its mark, for the latter had darted forward to cut down the foremost of the assassins, whom he sent shrieking and dying over the gunwale. Sir Philip was advancing upon the Marquis, the brothers had rushed to the side of their own vessel to repel the boarders, and the valets with Bompert, at a shout from Dumesnil, were taking in the sails. Before the deck was invaded it was cleared for action, and, after Guppy had hurried Helene and Clarise down into a little cabin below deck, the whole force stood, sword in hand, at the side of the careening pinnacle. Then ensued as fierce a struggle as ever left its victims in the bosom of the beautiful river. Fifteen fierce and merciless hirelings, headed by an infuriated madman, with the yells of fiends, leaped over the rails of the two vessels, and, landing upon the deck, bore down with unparalleled fury on the eight men who had gathered to oppose them. The fight was hand to hand, breast to breast, at the beginning of the onset, and thus there was little advantage in the skill of the

lesser over the brawn of the greater force. But, fortunately for our friends, Dumesnil's enormous strength soon cleared a space around him, into which his companions gathered, forming a circle with faces outward, and the odds became less terrible. The play of Belmore's sword was continuous, and thrice he drove it into the arm or bosom of an assailant. Hubert and Ralph did noble work, and succeeded in cutting down two of the ruffians; and Bompart, although but a fair swordsman, felt his arm nerved by the thought of Clarise, and held one of the sailors at bay. Guppy and his fellow-valets, unskilled in the use of sword, wrapped the sleeves of their jackets, which they tore off, around the blades, and with the heavy hilts dealt tremendous blows upon the skulls of their adversaries, until both Grosscup and Trotter were run through by thrusts that were mortal.

The only pistol in the hands of either side was that of the Marquis; and when it failed upon Dumesnil he threw it into the river, with a curse, and hurled himself forward, cutlas in hand, vociferating his ferocious orders to his band of cut-throats.

The contest had lasted for nearly half an hour; the echoes were rumbling among the hills, as steel struck steel, and yell answered yell. In vain had Sir Philip pressed toward the Marquis, across the deck. The boards were slippery with blood, the combatants were huddled in one writhing mass, now at one point, now at another, while the leader of the gang darted among them, stabbing, slashing, shouting and cursing, but always eluding the man who followed him from place to place with the persistency of fate.

At last the baronet thought he had his arch-enemy where he could not escape; and was rushing toward him to impale him, as he surely would have done, when

a voice of command was heard descending from the rocky height, and every hand was stayed.

“Peace on your lives?”

The blood-shot eyes of the men were upturned, and, to their astonishment and the dismay of the Marquis’ band, they saw a hundred muskets pointed at them.

An officer in a roquelaure stood a few steps lower down, and in front of the detachment, holding his sword above his head while he shouted to the combatants to desist; and as soon as the fighting ceased, he gave the order.

“Forward by twos, march!” and led his men rapidly down the steep.

In five minutes the soldiers had possession of both boats and their occupants. The Marquis, who had made an effort to leap overboard, was seized, his arms pinioned behind, and a guard placed over him. Then an inventory of the casualties was taken.

Four of the Marquis’ crew had been killed outright, and six of the remainder seriously or fatally wounded. Of Sir Philip’s party, not one except himself had escaped a wound. Dumesnil had received a severe thrust in the left shoulder, Hubert and Ralph had each the marks of the cutlas on their arms, Bompert was cut on both arms slightly, while Guppy bore testimony to his having been at close quarters with a pike, with which one of the sailors had literally torn his coat in two, and scraped a broad furrow across his breast. The two friends, who had for the last time fought with him, lay on their backs on deck, pierced to the heart. Guppy stooped over them reverently, took their lifeless hands in his and told them farewell in tones as pathetic as they were quaint. A detail of four soldiers was left in charge of the boats, with orders to bury the dead, and attend to the wounded until a relief party and a sur-

geon could be sent to them; and then the surviving belligerents preceded their escort up the path that led to the fortress.

The leader of the troops heard from Sir Philip on the way the story of the fight. He was a courteous and sensible man, and he did not hesitate to express his indignation at the fiendish conduct of the Marquis of B——, who stalked sullenly between his guards, casting from time to time at Helene, who walked at the side of Sir Philip, looks of the most furious and malignant hate. Bompert had taken Clarise under his protection; and in this fashion the castle was reached.

It was almost night when the frowning walls of the friendly fortress held our tired and wounded travelers; but the old Roman stronghold never held more grateful hearts nor more peaceful sleepers than on this night which brought their perilous adventures to an end.

On the morning following, while Sir Philip and Helene walked hand-in-hand through the chapel-room, used of old by the knights who sojourned in the castle, a graybearded priest, sandaled and gaberdined, came slowly toward them. His kindly face, seamed with the honorable scars of Time, was turned upon them smilingly; and, as his wrinkled hand was outstretched to welcome them, he said:

“It seems to me old Ehrenbreitstein will celebrate some noble nuptials soon; and that I, Father Mantchein, sacristan, will bid ye Godspeed as ye leave together!”

At that moment two guards were passing the wide entrance with a prisoner between them, on their way to the commandant. The prisoner was the Marquis of B——; and as he glanced into the chapel at the three so suggestively grouped there, he uttered a terribly cry, and was dragged along by his guards to hear the judg-



ment pronounced upon him for the crimes he had perpetrated and incited on German territory.

The October sun looked into the old chapel of Ehrenbreitstein, while this was passing, and rested like a crown of gold upon two noble heads, as they bent in prayer at the little altar of stone.

THE END.



























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